

In The Matter Of:
*BEFORE THE CALUMET TOWNSHIP
BOARD OF TRUSTEES*

*February 18, 2019
REGULAR MEETING*

BOSS REPORTERS

*Gary * Merrillville * Valparaiso, Indiana
3893 East Lincoln Highway (Rt. 30)
Merrillville, Indiana 46410
(219) 769-9090*

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1 STATE OF INDIANA)
) SS:
 2 COUNTY OF LAKE)

3
 4 THE CALUMET TOWNSHIP BOARD MEETING
 5 GARY, INDIANA
 6

7
 8 REPORT OF PROCEEDINGS had at the meeting
 9 before the Calumet Township Board, reported by
 10 Kristen K. Stokes, CSR, Notary Public in and for the
 11 County of Lake, State of Indiana, taken at the
 12 Calumet Township Trustee Building, 610 Connecticut
 13 Street, Gary, Indiana, on February 18, 2019,
 14 scheduled to begin at 4:00 p.m. in the evening.
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APPEARANCES:

Darren Washington, Board Chairman

James Piggee, Board Member

Jacqueline Holmes, Secretary

Kimberly Robinson, Township Trustee

Sherita Smith, Chief Deputy

Romeka Bonds, Executive Secretary

Deidre Monroe, Board Attorney

Rinzer Williams, III, Township Attorney

Steve Dalton, Township Accountant

Gladys Miller, Finance Manager

and

Members of the Public

* * * * *

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1 CHAIRMAN WASHINGTON: Good afternoon,
2 ladies and gentlemen. Welcome to the
3 Calumet Township Board of Trustees meeting.
4 May we have a roll call, Ms. Bonds?

5 MS. BONDS: Ms. Holmes?

6 MS. HOLMES: Yes.

7 MS. BONDS: Mr. Piggee?

8 MR. PIGGEE: Yes.

9 MS. BONDS: Mr. Washington?

10 CHAIRMAN WASHINGTON: Yes. With three
11 here and none absent. We're ready for the
12 meeting.

13 Let's stand for the Pledge of
14 Allegiance.

15 (EVERYONE STOOD FOR THE PLEDGE OF
16 ALLEGIANCE.)

17 CHAIRMAN WASHINGTON: Next item, Item
18 No. 2, approval for the minutes of
19 January 8, 2019.

20 MR. PIGGEE: So moved.

21 CHAIRMAN WASHINGTON: You have to make a
22 motion first.

23 MR. PIGGEE: I make a motion that we
24 accept the minutes for January 8th.

25 CHAIRMAN WASHINGTON: I second the

1 CHAIRMAN WASHINGTON: Yes.

2 MS. ROBINSON: I would like you to make
3 corrections, please. It's not the Calumet
4 Township Board of Trustees. It's just
5 Calumet Township Board.

6 CHAIRMAN WASHINGTON: Calumet Township
7 Board.

8 MS. ROBINSON: That's it. It's not the
9 advisory anymore. It's not the trustees.
10 It's just Calumet Township Board.

11 CHAIRMAN WASHINGTON: Okay.

12 MS. ROBINSON: Okay. I just wanted that
13 to be noted.

14 CHAIRMAN WASHINGTON: Okay.

15 MR. PIGGEE: Mr. Chair, I accept the
16 agenda.

17 CHAIRMAN WASHINGTON: Okay. Is there a
18 second?

19 MS. HOLMES: I second.

20 CHAIRMAN WASHINGTON: Roll call,
21 Ms. Bonds.

22 MS. BONDS: Mr. Piggee?

23 MR. PIGGEE: Yes.

24 MS. BONDS: Ms. Holmes?

25 MS. HOLMES: Yes.

1 Community Service Fund for Rainy Day. I
2 thought it might be helpful if you would
3 pause just a second and take a look at the
4 annual report, which is the larger packet
5 and turn to the second page. The second
6 page is your year-end balance sheet. It
7 shows the fund balances in each of the
8 funds.

9 And if you look at the Line 2 and Line 4
10 on that second page, the Civil Township
11 Fund, end of the year it was \$695,000, and
12 the Community Service Fund end of the year
13 was \$51,000.

14 So you may ask the question, why do we
15 need to do temporary loans? And the reason
16 is, although at December 31st we may have
17 had those two balances, between
18 December 31st and the next time we get the
19 property taxes in June, we'll run through
20 those dollars. And so we're putting a
21 temporary loan in place, so that we have
22 cash flow capabilities and that fund can
23 stand on its own. Each fund and fund
24 account needs to stand on its own like a
25 separate business, and it doesn't need to

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1 dip into the negative. And if we anticipate
2 dipping into the negative, it needs to
3 borrow money. We could borrow from a bank,
4 and in doing so, we would pay interest. In
5 this case you're borrowing from yourselves,
6 from your Rainy Day Savings Fund, so that
7 you don't have to pay any interest on an
8 annual basis.

9 As soon as these loans, if you do adopt
10 them tonight, are entered into the books,
11 then we'll also repay last year's loans, so
12 they're not continuing. They have to be
13 repaid. And in the fall you authorize us to
14 wait until now to repay them. So each year
15 we borrow money, and each year we repay the
16 money.

17 MR. PIGGEE: Mr. Chair?

18 CHAIRMAN WASHINGTON: Yes, Mr. Piggee.

19 MR. PIGGEE: You sure know what I was
20 going to ask, didn't you? Tell me this.
21 When do -- when is the property -- the
22 property tax you just mentioned, when is it
23 due, the money, to the township?

24 MR. DALTON: So the county treasurer
25 sends out property tax bills to all

1 taxpayers in April. Taxpayers are due to
2 pay those bills in May. Then the county
3 takes the next 30 days to issue settlement
4 checks. And we receive those dollars in
5 June. Same thing happens again in November
6 when the second half is due, and we receive
7 the second half of our property taxes in
8 December.

9 MR. PIGGEE: The reason I'm concerned is
10 because, you know, this is my first time.

11 MR. DALTON: Yes.

12 MR. PIGGEE: And I would just like to
13 know the amount of money that we would get
14 from property taxes.

15 MR. DALTON: The total amount of money
16 that we would receive? Is that your
17 question? What will we receive?

18 MR. PIGGEE: Yes. What will we receive?

19 MR. DALTON: That I don't have in front
20 of me, the budget. If you looked at the
21 budget, each fund was approved by the board
22 for a specific property tax levy. And
23 you -- that's the amount that you are taxed
24 for that fund to the taxpayers. You will
25 never receive 100 percent of it because

1 there's a circuit breaker. We talk a lot
2 about circuit breaker credits. My guess,
3 you'll receive somewhere in the neighborhood
4 of 70 percent of that levy, half in June,
5 and the other half in December. So 35, 35.

6 MR. PIGGEE: 30 percent will come in
7 December?

8 MR. DALTON: Yes.

9 MR. PIGGEE: Okay. Thank you.

10 CHAIRMAN WASHINGTON: Ms. Holmes, do you
11 have any questions?

12 MS. HOLMES: No, I don't.

13 CHAIRMAN WASHINGTON: Okay. Steve, are
14 you -- do you have anything else?

15 MR. DALTON: I have nothing else. I
16 would just ask if you'd adopt if you could.

17 CHAIRMAN WASHINGTON: Okay. Madam Chair --
18 Madam Trustee?

19 MS. ROBINSON: Yes, Mr. Washington. I
20 don't have the exact amounts, but what we
21 are hoping to get out of some of it, we need
22 to develop a judgment fund because, again,
23 well, currently it's the same lawsuit that
24 we have faced with the former employee. So
25 we're getting towards the end, and insurance

1 is handling it, but we have a \$15,000
2 deductible. And so instead of taking it
3 out, I want it to come from a dedicated line
4 item, so some of that will go for that.
5 Some will go for we have to purchase new
6 computers, desktops, for all of the staff
7 because what we've been doing is trying to
8 work through what we have and taking -- once
9 the memory is full, we've been taking it
10 from other vacant ones, but we just can't
11 stretch them anymore.

12 And we'd also like to do more
13 renovations at the NPC. We want to really
14 lower the floor. As nice and pretty as it
15 looks, it's been kind of a problem with some
16 people making it up even the two inches or
17 whatever. So we may be able to get it
18 lowered. And I also want to get a restroom
19 in our back room where we've also be
20 utilizing as a place for repass and, you
21 know, so we can function.

22 And I think -- oh, the final one was we
23 need to update the camera systems here and
24 at the NPC so that they will be compatible
25 with the computers and the screen. You

1 know, we have the -- I think it's about
2 seven-phase screens on there for our
3 security purposes, so we need to get those
4 updated.

5 CHAIRMAN WASHINGTON: Okay.

6 MR. PIGGEE: Ms. Robinson?

7 MS. ROBINSON: Yes, sir.

8 MR. PIGGEE: Have you started to work on
9 that and have people coming in and --

10 MS. ROBINSON: We've always maintained
11 the same people that was here when we got
12 here that they have done repairs. And yes,
13 we have three quotes on hand.

14 MR. PIGGEE: Oh, you have quotes?

15 MS. ROBINSON: Yes, sir.

16 MR. PIGGEE: Okay. Are we going to vote
17 on that tonight?

18 CHAIRMAN WASHINGTON: No.

19 MR. PIGGEE: Mr. Chair?

20 MS. ROBINSON: That's not how that
21 works.

22 MR. PIGGEE: Okay.

23 CHAIRMAN WASHINGTON: She'll bring it to
24 us when --

25 MR. PIGGEE: When she's ready for us.

1 Okay. Just learning the procedures.

2 CHAIRMAN WASHINGTON: Any more
3 questions?

4 MS. HOLMES: No.

5 CHAIRMAN WASHINGTON: All right.
6 Chairman would like to make a motion to
7 adopt Resolution 2019-'01 Rainy Day Loan.
8 Is there a second?

9 MS. HOLMES: I second.

10 CHAIRMAN WASHINGTON: Any discussion by
11 board members?

12 MR. PIGGEE: Uh-uh.

13 CHAIRMAN WASHINGTON: Hearing none, may
14 we have roll call, Ms. Bonds?

15 MS. BONDS: Mr. Piggee?

16 MR. PIGGEE: Yes.

17 MS. BONDS: Ms. Holmes?

18 MS. HOLMES: Yes.

19 MS. BONDS: Mr. Washington?

20 CHAIRMAN WASHINGTON: Yes. Three yeses,
21 zero nays, the motion carries.

22 Item No. 4, Resolution 2019-'02, Annual
23 Financial Report.

24 MR. DALTON: I'll direct your attention
25 to Resolution 2019-'02, which is a single

1 page certification. This will be the
2 document you actually sign if you approve
3 the annual report this evening. It refers
4 to the larger packet, the annual report
5 packet.

6 By law, we do it every year, the trustee
7 is required to provide to you an annual
8 financial report showing the beginning
9 balances and ending balances of each fund
10 and the detailed reports of detailed
11 receipts, detailed disbursements, capital
12 assets, payables and receivables. It
13 functions as a full financial report on the
14 activities in 2018 of Calumet Township.

15 You as a board are asked to have
16 reviewed it and then to certify on this
17 resolution that you have done so accepting.
18 If you had some part of this annual report
19 that you disagreed with, then we would list
20 that item on the resolution. Outside of
21 that, we would ask that you approve the
22 annual report as current forth.

23 CHAIRMAN WASHINGTON: Any questions by
24 the board members?

25 MS. HOLMES: No.

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1 CHAIRMAN WASHINGTON: Chair would like
2 to make a motion for the approval of
3 Resolution 2019-'02, the Annual Financial
4 Report. Is there a second?

5 MR. PIGGEE: Second.

6 CHAIRMAN WASHINGTON: Can we have a roll
7 call, Ms. Bonds?

8 MS. BONDS: Mr. Piggee?

9 MR. PIGGEE: Yes.

10 MS. BONDS: Ms. Holmes?

11 MS. HOLMES: Yes.

12 MS. BONDS: Mr. Washington?

13 CHAIRMAN WASHINGTON: Yes.

14 With three yeses, zero nays, the motion
15 carries.

16 The next item is Calumet Township Board
17 of Trustees meeting schedule for 2019. Can
18 you pass this down.

19 (SCHEDULE DISPERSED.)

20 CHAIRMAN WASHINGTON: One of the
21 biggest, of course, criticisms come from the
22 public, especially down state, about the
23 board is that we don't have enough meetings.
24 One thing I've come to learn as being on the
25 township board is that you really don't have

1 to have meetings if there's really nothing
2 to discuss. So they have pretty much been
3 called when we need to pass new information.

4 Mr. Piggee gave me a call, and I'm
5 pretty sure he'll articulate his issues, and
6 I was talking to Ms. Holmes, and of course,
7 people have their reasons why they target
8 Calumet Township, but also, there's a
9 Griffith situation. And one of the things
10 that I did want to do is to extend the
11 opportunity for us to have meetings in
12 Griffith so their voices can be heard.
13 We're not talking about having meetings
14 every month, but I have a schedule where
15 we've already had one meeting in January and
16 the rest of the schedule looks at five
17 potential meetings.

18 Also, the trustee can call meetings as
19 she needs, so I talked to Councilman Rick
20 Ryfa in Griffith, and they always have
21 available for us to meet the first Monday of
22 every month, but we have our meetings also
23 on every third Monday of the month. So as
24 you look at the schedule, the meetings that
25 we're looking at having in Griffith Town

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1 Hall would be on the first Monday of the
2 month, and those meetings here at the
3 township building would be on the third
4 Monday.

5 If those need to be canceled, we can do
6 that, but having a standing list of meeting
7 times that can be posted for the public,
8 because a lot of times when we do have
9 meetings, the trustee provides us with the
10 meeting where we need to have a meeting, and
11 sometimes people are not diligent in being
12 able to come and find out when the meetings
13 are because they are called as needed.

14 So this opportunity, Ms. Holmes and
15 Mr. Piggee, provides no excuse for anyone in
16 the public to say that the Calumet Township
17 Board does not have a set schedule. That
18 set schedule is always and can be amended by
19 the Board of Trustees. So I present this
20 right now.

21 Are there any questions, any comments,
22 by board members?

23 MS. HOLMES: No.

24 MR. PIGGEE: No. I think it's a good
25 idea, Mr. President. I think you've done an

1 omen thing with this because I think
2 Griffith needs to be exposed to this.

3 CHAIRMAN WASHINGTON: Well, it's not
4 just only about Griffith.

5 MR. PIGGEE: Well, it's not only about
6 Griffith, but I think Griffith could use,
7 you know --

8 CHAIRMAN WASHINGTON: Yeah, they need to
9 have that opportunity. But again, as me and
10 Ms. Holmes discussed, there are other
11 reasons why people complain about the Cal
12 Township Board outside of what the real
13 reasons are, and we'll get to those a little
14 bit later.

15 But are there any questions or comments
16 by our trustee?

17 MS. ROBINSON: Yes, I have a few,
18 Mr. Washington.

19 In looking at the schedule, I have --
20 when I first came in, we did reach out to
21 Griffith, and we tried to ask them for space
22 there or send a case manager out there. But
23 as you all know, it's been their dream to,
24 you know, secede from us, so -- so it is.
25 But the reason throughout the state,

1 township boards have four mandatory
2 meetings. And you guys can't help that, if
3 that's all you have to do.

4 I am just afraid that if we go out
5 there, what will the agenda really look
6 like? What will you have on the agenda to
7 speak on? Because we are not general
8 services. We are not, you know, anything
9 else associated with Griffith, the Town of
10 Griffith, besides Calumet Township poor
11 relief. So I am afraid that it will become
12 a free-for-all, some kind of meeting that we
13 are not prepared or not even, you know,
14 wanting to be in.

15 And we also need to add a meeting in
16 October because, as you know, you have two
17 mandatory meetings at the end of the year.
18 You have October -- well, you have September
19 for the first hearing of your budget and
20 October for the passing of your budget.
21 November 4th is too late because you know we
22 have to have our budget accepted by
23 November 1st. All municipalities have to do
24 that.

25 So there may be something -- September

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1 6th is fine because that can be our first
2 meeting where we give our budget for review,
3 and then we just need something there
4 probably in October rather than the November
5 for the passing of the budget.

6 But I don't know if you really want to
7 take all of that information out there to
8 Griffith. We could always use the
9 multi-purpose center. That's been used
10 before, as well. It's kind of like an
11 in-between area, but I am just, you know,
12 concerned with the Pandora box, if you will,
13 that we will open in going out there when it
14 is very clear and obvious that we are not
15 welcome, nor wanted.

16 And I know your discussions and
17 conversations, Mr. Chair, with Councilman
18 Ryfa. I get that. I've had the same with
19 he and Tony -- Holmes? What's his last
20 name? Hobson? Tony Hobson, as well. We've
21 been out there, as well, on several
22 occasions. I don't have any personal, you
23 know, problems with them. I wish we could
24 all get along and, you know, get it
25 together, but it's -- you know, that's on

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1 their side.

2 MR. PIGGEE: Mr. Chair --

3 CHAIRMAN WASHINGTON: Hold on.

4 MS. ROBINSON: So I would just ask that
5 you amend it if you're going to accept it
6 tonight and put in October because we also
7 do our holiday schedule, our standard, and
8 we usually don't go beyond the October
9 because we've only had four mandatory
10 meetings as prescribed by the state to have.

11 CHAIRMAN WASHINGTON: Mr. Piggee?

12 MR. PIGGEE: Ms. Robinson?

13 MS. ROBINSON: Yes.

14 MR. PIGGEE: I was going to save this
15 until after the meeting, but I have to bring
16 it up now because of what you just said.

17 Is there a possibility that you could
18 have a satellite office in Griffith like two
19 days a week probably just for a half day, a
20 satellite?

21 MS. ROBINSON: We have asked them for
22 space. If you guys can talk to them again,
23 we have case managers that are willing and
24 able to go out there, and we have a case
25 manager at the multi-purpose center, which

1 is -- but most people come down here, but
2 we've also kept a case manager there because
3 we do 4 days, 10 hours here, so that's our
4 24-hour turnaround out there, as well. So
5 if you guys can get that together, I have no
6 problem with that. We can send a person
7 there.

8 MR. PIGGEE: The reason I made that
9 statement is the gentleman that was here at
10 the last meeting from Griffith, he seemed to
11 have welcomed that idea of going to
12 Griffith.

13 MS. ROBINSON: I understand, Mr. Piggee.

14 MR. PIGGEE: And I'm willing to work
15 with Mr. President to bring this to a
16 reality.

17 CHAIRMAN WASHINGTON: Let me say this
18 because I don't want us branching outside
19 our responsibilities as a board. As a board
20 we are to have meetings for the public. If
21 Ms. Robinson and her staff would like to
22 reach out to Griffith to try to get space to
23 do that, I applaud that. But I don't think
24 the board should do that.

25 One of the reasons I didn't put anything

1 down for October, Ms. Robinson, is that when
2 it comes to the budget and things like that,
3 sometimes it has to change. So as I stated
4 before, you have the autonomy to call a
5 meeting and no matter what date it is
6 because it may have to change.

7 MS. ROBINSON: But that's your mandatory
8 meeting, sir. That's what I'm saying. You
9 have to add an October meeting in there.
10 I'm saying that's one of your four
11 mandatories.

12 CHAIRMAN WASHINGTON: So do you have a
13 date right now that you --

14 MS. ROBINSON: No, no. That's on
15 you-all.

16 CHAIRMAN WASHINGTON: No, I understand
17 that, but I'm just saying that you provide
18 us the information so we can have the
19 meeting. So in the past we never had a date
20 because we had to wait to get information.
21 And doing it this early right now doesn't
22 make sense if we don't get the information
23 in enough time. That's why I didn't put it
24 down.

25 MS. ROBINSON: Okay. So the third

1 October would be Monday, the 21st.

2 MR. PIGGEE: Third of October?

3 MS. ROBINSON: The third October -- the
4 third Monday in October is October 21st.
5 And that will be here or Griffith Town Hall?

6 CHAIRMAN WASHINGTON: We can have it
7 here.

8 MS. ROBINSON: Okay. At 6:00 p.m.

9 CHAIRMAN WASHINGTON: So we'll add that
10 to the list. And also, my comments
11 regarding the list is concerned, I don't
12 want anybody to be afraid -- I'm not
13 concerned about what Griffith thinks.
14 Regardless of what they have tried to do,
15 until something happens in the legislature,
16 they are still a part of Cal Township.

17 As I know right now, that legislation
18 that Chris Chyung is putting forth will
19 probably not even get a hearing, but there
20 is workings by Griffith to try to extend
21 their time to go to another -- what I
22 believe is that until they're gone, I want
23 them to have that opportunity.

24 Now, if we go out there on March 4th and
25 they act like they don't have any sense,

1 they're disrespectful, and they're doing
2 that, we won't have any meetings.

3 MR. PIGGEE: Right.

4 CHAIRMAN WASHINGTON: Okay. But I want
5 to give the opportunity to extend the olive
6 branch to have meetings by this board. And
7 at all of our board meetings, the public is
8 invited. There's a public comment section
9 where people, when they come to the
10 meetings, they can express what they want to
11 say and their concerns. And it's our
12 responsibility, especially my responsibility
13 as Chair, to make sure there's order
14 maintained. So when we go there to have the
15 meeting and anyone tries to attack the
16 trustee or board members, anybody on the
17 staff, I will handle that. And if that
18 means that we'll end the meeting and not go
19 back there, that's fine, but I just think
20 that we need to extend that, and that has
21 not happened since I've been on the board.

22 So I think it's a great idea. We'll add
23 Monday, October 21st, at 6:00 p.m.,
24 especially for the budget times. And again,
25 if we get close to a certain meeting and

1 especially up to this first meeting on
2 March 4th, if we feel as a board that
3 there's too much disrespect -- and again, I
4 don't want to speak anything into existence
5 that hasn't already happened. I believe
6 that that meeting may be fine. People may
7 express -- there may not be a soul that
8 shows up. And if they don't show up, then
9 we won't go back out, but I don't want
10 anybody to ever say they were not extended
11 an opportunity for this board to come to
12 Griffith and do that.

13 And then at that time, also, it could be
14 expressed that the trustee and her staff has
15 extended the olive branch on a few occasions
16 to have a worker there. And if they
17 continue to say no, then we wash our hands.
18 We're fine, and we'll move on with the
19 business of the township.

20 So are there any more comments by anyone
21 here or on the board? If not, the Chair
22 would like to entertain a motion.

23 MR. PIGGEE: So moved.

24 CHAIRMAN WASHINGTON: Wait a minute.

25 Let me finish.

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1 MR. PIGGEE: Okay.

2 CHAIRMAN WASHINGTON: On the Calumet
3 Township Board of Trustees meeting schedule
4 with Monday, October 21st, at 6:00 p.m.,
5 added to the schedule, is there a second?

6 MR. PIGGEE: Second.

7 CHAIRMAN WASHINGTON: Roll call,
8 Ms. Bonds.

9 MS. BONDS: Mr. Piggee?

10 MR. PIGGEE: Yes.

11 MS. BONDS: Ms. Holmes?

12 MS. HOLMES: Yes.

13 MS. BONDS: Mr. Washington?

14 CHAIRMAN WASHINGTON: Yes.

15 With three yeses, zero nos, the motion
16 carries.

17 Public comments? Any comments by the
18 public?

19 (NO RESPONSE FROM AUDIENCE MEMBERS.)

20 CHAIRMAN WASHINGTON: All right. Madam
21 Trustee, the floor is yours.

22 MS. ROBINSON: Okay. Thank you. I just
23 want to add to the comments that for the
24 past, maybe, two weeks ITA has been really
25 working hard with House Bill 1650, and it

1 was defeated. So that's a good thing
2 because they were trying to do away with the
3 township board and not even at the end of
4 your term but by the end of the year.

5 CHAIRMAN WASHINGTON: Right.

6 MS. ROBINSON: So we really need to send
7 letters of thanks to Representative Vernon
8 Smith and Representative Ragen Hatcher.
9 Somehow representative Earl Harris,
10 Representative Candelaria Reardon and
11 Representative Chris Chyung were -- they
12 were kind of excused. I don't know why, but
13 it just -- when I looked, they sent the
14 list.

15 And what I would do is ask -- or if you
16 guys could give Ms. Bonds your email,
17 because ITA sends all of this out like
18 Sunday, Saturday, all days and times, and I
19 just want it to come straight to you than it
20 getting to me because we have problems all
21 the time here with our internet sort of.
22 And so sometimes it may be something that
23 you guys really need to know, but it was
24 defeated 75 to 28, and you can believe that
25 this is probably not the end, and the

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1 amendment that they made to it was not that
2 it was not going to happen, but it was not
3 going to happen this year. So they're going
4 to come back.

5 And the house bill that Representative
6 Chyung is working on, I would agree with
7 you, is not going to probably get past
8 anybody this year, although Representative
9 Mara Candelaria Reardon did sign onto it.
10 I'm not sure what her point is.

11 So as much as I talked with the
12 legislators, you know them, our delegation
13 from Gary. You guys speak with them equally
14 and letting them know how you feel because
15 they really want to -- we had even an early
16 morning call-in where most all trustees and
17 board members were called in. It was
18 nonspeaking, but it was a lot of listening,
19 and they said that they were most upset for
20 testimony that there wasn't any board
21 members down there to actually -- you know,
22 it was mostly trustees and other people and
23 the ITA.

24 So we are members of ITA, so you can go
25 on at any time and use their services that

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1 they have available. And --

2 CHAIRMAN WASHINGTON: Madam Trustee, on
3 that point --

4 MS. ROBINSON: Yes.

5 CHAIRMAN WASHINGTON: I got your email
6 when you first alerted us about the bill,
7 but I didn't get anything from ITA about
8 coming down and testifying, so --

9 MS. ROBINSON: Did you give your -- the
10 one, I think it's SBC?

11 CHAIRMAN WASHINGTON: Yes.

12 MS. ROBINSON: So we have that, and we
13 will turn it in to them so that they can add
14 you into that rotation.

15 And I think -- oh, Mr. Dalton has one
16 more presentation.

17 MR. DALTON: Thank you, Madam Trustee,
18 for your records. This is not an action
19 required by the board to take any action on,
20 but it is a notice that's required to be
21 given to the board. This list of five
22 checks are all in excess of two years old,
23 and they obviously need to be voided out of
24 the system because they're not going to get
25 cashed. And we're required to notify you

1 that those five checks are being voided and
2 being taken out of the system, and the
3 dollar amounts that would've been paid out
4 on those funds are being receipted back into
5 the original funds that they were taken out
6 of. Just a matter of notice.

7 MS. ROBINSON: Yeah, you see those
8 vendors, those are landlords.

9 CHAIRMAN WASHINGTON: Okay.

10 MS. ROBINSON: How someone has not
11 cashed the check for those amounts, they
12 obviously get a lot from us, but I know that
13 one --

14 CHAIRMAN WASHINGTON: Are they still
15 operating with us?

16 MS. ROBINSON: Yes. And when I first
17 got here, we had meetings because -- how
18 much has Ms. Miller, has she had outstanding
19 at one time?

20 MS. MILLER: She just cashed about
21 \$33,000 worth of checks.

22 MR. PIGGEE: What?

23 CHAIRMAN WASHINGTON: I mean, doesn't
24 she --

25 MS. MILLER: She holds them. There's

1 two vendors that hold their checks for a
2 while. And then they start to --

3 MS. ROBINSON: I think before they had
4 real problems with doing timely, which when
5 we came in, we certainly improved. So a lot
6 of the vendors still kind of -- and I'm
7 like, we've been here for years now. Come
8 on. You've seen the changes, so -- yeah,
9 this lady does have lots of property, and
10 everything is up to date, so maybe she have
11 to keep it from herself. I don't know.
12 Just pay her taxes out. I don't know.

13 MR. PIGGEE: Mr. Chair?

14 MS. ROBINSON: Yeah, I'm done. Thank
15 you, Mr. Chair.

16 CHAIRMAN WASHINGTON: Board comments?
17 Mr. Piggee?

18 MR. PIGGEE: Madam Trustee, I have a
19 question to ask you. The repairs that you
20 stated earlier --

21 MS. ROBINSON: Uh-huh.

22 MR. PIGGEE: -- are those repairs in the
23 budget and everything? I need to know that.

24 MS. ROBINSON: Yes, we have capital
25 allocated for improvements. We have a

1 direct line item for that. If you look at
2 the budget that you got --

3 MR. PIGGEE: Oh, we got that?

4 MS. ROBINSON: Yeah, it will be in
5 there.

6 MR. PIGGEE: Okay.

7 MS. ROBINSON: And in case you don't
8 know, Mr. Piggee, if you haven't read your
9 constitution, as I suggested, your code, I
10 only have to come to you if there's a
11 contract beyond \$25,000.

12 MR. PIGGEE: Okay.

13 MS. ROBINSON: So if we find someone --
14 and we always try to use local. We always
15 try to find someone with low cost, below
16 budget, so --

17 MR. PIGGEE: Okay.

18 MS. ROBINSON: Okay?

19 MR. PIGGEE: Thank you.

20 CHAIRMAN WASHINGTON: Ms. Holmes, any
21 comments?

22 MS. HOLMES: No comments.

23 CHAIRMAN WASHINGTON: My comments, I
24 want to ask Mr. Dalton, or anyone on the
25 township staff can respond. I try not to go

1 beyond our scope as Board President, but I
2 am a bit concerned about the unfair labeling
3 our township is getting based on 12 times
4 the average that the Department of Local
5 Government Finance keeps going back and
6 forth on.

7 My concern is, what I want to find out,
8 especially during this session, is why is
9 our assessed value for Calumet Township so
10 low? And that is one of the main problems.
11 And if that's something you-all can look
12 into and let us know. I'm just trying to
13 figure out, when we look at our assessed
14 value and with it being so low, is there
15 anything -- and I know we've cut -- there's
16 nothing that we can do that in Calumet
17 Township, but there are a lot of other
18 taxing units, that maybe there needs to be
19 some discussion with other units or doing
20 something to find out what can bring up
21 those assessed values.

22 I think that they're going to be here to
23 stay. I don't know even if they get a year,
24 I don't see St. John's or North Township
25 allowing them back -- allowing them to come

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1 there. So I just think we need to get ready
2 for them. But, again, maybe there's
3 something that we need to have a meeting
4 with all the taxing units in Cal Township to
5 see what can be done to help our assessed
6 value go up some. I don't know the answer
7 to that. And whatever we can do to help,
8 we're willing to help.

9 MS. ROBINSON: That will probably --

10 MR. DALTON: Go ahead.

11 MS. ROBINSON: I'm sorry. Mr. Chairman,
12 that would probably be more of a question
13 that you would have for Assessor Prince
14 because, as you know, Cal Township is the
15 City of Gary, Town of Griffith and the
16 unincorporated which is run by the county.
17 And the difference in the two, like I told
18 the Griffith people, God bless you all that
19 you have nicer properties with greater value
20 and you are able to get more off of what --
21 your collection rate is probably 75,
22 85 percent. Our collection in the City of
23 Gary is a little probably below half.

24 So as you go around, you can see for
25 yourself why we have nothing -- we don't

1 have a great assessed value because we don't
2 have anything to assess. Most of the
3 abandoned property, you know, even if they
4 were covered or even if we, you know, have
5 these people coming in rebuying and
6 repurposing a property.

7 That's why you try to get businesses,
8 you know, to come back in, and we'll get
9 taxes from that. But you know, it's just
10 that Griffith has greater assessed values
11 because they have more properties maintained
12 and kept on the tax rolls, whereas the City
13 of Gary where we get some of our budget does
14 not.

15 CHAIRMAN WASHINGTON: I'll reach out to
16 Assessor Prince and ask him about that, and
17 I've got a response back, and I'll get with
18 them on that.

19 The one thing I do know is that with the
20 properties in Gary, what City Council
21 probably needs to look at is eliminating and
22 not providing tax abatements, especially to
23 lure new businesses to come in that may not
24 hire our own people from Gary to get jobs.

25 The other thing I'm looking at is I've

1 been looking at the Gary Redevelopment
2 Commission that have between 12 and 14 tax
3 increment finance districts, and if you are
4 not familiar with TIFs, it's when that
5 redevelopment commission will go to take
6 money from taxes to lure or to develop a
7 property to lure other companies to come in,
8 but if that money is not invested and it
9 doesn't go back, that's money that we lose
10 as a community.

11 And I know we have -- I think it was
12 between 12 and 14 with the redevelopment.
13 So I'm kind looking at those different tax
14 increment financing districts and seeing,
15 like, are we really getting the benefit in
16 the City of Gary from the property taxes
17 that we're taking from those TIFs, and are
18 those TIFs actually benefiting bringing jobs
19 and bringing businesses and things like
20 that? Because if it's not, maybe the City
21 of Redevelopment needs to look at reducing
22 some of those TIFs to do that. And you look
23 at them and I've looked at some in the State
24 of Indiana. They have very good tools, but
25 when they don't work, it hurts the

1 community. So those tax abatements and
2 those TIFs could be some issues with Cal
3 Township.

4 So Ms. Robinson, thank you for that. I
5 did reach out to Councilman -- I mean
6 Assessor Prince, and I will continue that
7 conversation with him.

8 Mr. Piggee?

9 MR. PIGGEE: Yes, sir. Mr. Chair, Madam
10 Township --

11 MS. ROBINSON: Trustee.

12 MR. PIGGEE: -- Madam Township Trustee,
13 what do we have to do with the U.S. Steel in
14 terms of the properties and stuff of that
15 nature? Do we receive anything from U.S.
16 Steel?

17 MS. ROBINSON: We do not. What our
18 issue is is that I can assure you that we
19 are solvent. I mean, that's why --

20 MR. PIGGEE: I know we are. I know we
21 are.

22 MS. ROBINSON: Okay. Hang on.

23 MR. PIGGEE: I like the report and
24 everything in terms of money, but I was just
25 wondering because other areas receive monies

1 and stuff from their steel mills, like
2 Mittal used to be Inland and that type of
3 thing. And we're not receiving anything
4 from U.S., which is the largest steel mill
5 in the country.

6 MS. ROBINSON: For that you would have
7 to talk to the city about that. The way our
8 budget is set up, the only thing we receive
9 and actually share with the city are taxes,
10 real estate taxes that come in. That's
11 where our budget is funded from.

12 And what I'm saying is that in the
13 purpose of saying we are solvent is that
14 even if Griffith left us tomorrow, we would
15 still be okay because of the way the tax
16 structure is. And if Steve could point that
17 out as he has so many times assured me
18 because it would be like the only people who
19 would really be hurt if Griffith was able to
20 leave would be the Gary civil city budget
21 and schools.

22 CHAIRMAN WASHINGTON: Which is --

23 MS. ROBINSON: Already defunct so --

24 MR. PIGGEE: You're right.

25 MS. ROBINSON: But -- you know, so it's

1 not a -- it's not anything we can do
2 personally besides try to do the best job we
3 can here in keeping ourself solvent as
4 township officials because it's, you know,
5 two different areas of government.

6 MR. PIGGEE: The reason I ask that
7 question is that at one time -- at one time
8 not too many years ago U.S. Steel was giving
9 150 million a year, giving out for the city
10 and for the school district and those types
11 of things. Now they're only giving 5
12 million out. And that's nothing. 5 million
13 at one time wouldn't even make their monthly
14 payroll for the school system.

15 MS. ROBINSON: I agree with you,
16 Mr. Piggee, but that's not us.

17 MR. PIGGEE: Okay. I thought it was.

18 MS. ROBINSON: You can't come over and
19 transfer your school board information.
20 It's not us.

21 MR. PIGGEE: Okay. I thought it was.

22 MS. ROBINSON: You have to go to city
23 council and have that discussion.

24 MR. PIGGEE: I thought it was.

25 CHAIRMAN WASHINGTON: Mr. Piggee,

1 Trustee Robinson is correct. But what will
2 also add to help us out, if the municipal
3 city bans the tax abatement. It was just in
4 the paper last year where the city council
5 gave the U.S. Steel another tax abatement.
6 It was an article in the paper that was
7 provided to the city. There was an article
8 in the newspaper that they gave them a tax
9 abatement.

10 MR. PIGGEE: That's crazy.

11 CHAIRMAN WASHINGTON: Since they are a
12 part of Cal Township. Again, when you flip
13 that 12 times average, we need as much as we
14 can because people don't understand, and I
15 know this from Trustee Robinson giving us
16 that information, there's NIPSCO bills that
17 have to be paid, there's rent and a lot of
18 stuff. And our township is one of the
19 largest in the state. So I think that every
20 taxing unit that encompasses Cal Township
21 needs to be due diligent in watching what
22 they do because it affects us.

23 Again, tax abatements have nothing to do
24 with the township. The township is solvent
25 doing what they're supposed to be doing, but

1 I guarantee you if we didn't recklessly --
2 and I can't say recklessly because I don't
3 know the standing of the those 12 to 14
4 TIFs. Okay. But I guarantee at least 6 of
5 them have not generated any revenue for the
6 municipal city. If those are cut out, then
7 that adds to Cal Township's -- that takes
8 away from the township's woes.

9 Tax abatements. I remember Senator Ed
10 Charbonneau came to meetings after meetings,
11 and the council at that time always came to
12 Ed Charbonneau, and there was tax abatement
13 after tax abatement. It didn't just start
14 with Karen Freeman-Wilson's administration.
15 It goes back to Barnes and before that when
16 Charbonneau was coming to those meetings and
17 the councils after councils was giving tax
18 abatements and it's continuing to happen.
19 And again, if those tax abatements continue
20 to happen, I don't know how accurate your
21 information is, U.S. Steel should be giving
22 a lot more.

23 MR. PIGGEE: Yeah, I know.

24 CHAIRMAN WASHINGTON: And they should be
25 limiting the tax abatements they give, so

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1 that's just my point. I'm looking at ways
2 to help our burden because before the
3 Department of Government Finance flipped
4 this 12 times average after they told me,
5 you don't know this because you wasn't on
6 the board. They told us everything was
7 fine. Then because of other issues I won't
8 get into publicly, the script was flipped.
9 And now we're not where we're at.

10 So I think that since our staff has done
11 due diligence in making sure that it's
12 solvent, some other partners need to be
13 diligent in what they're doing because what
14 they're doing is affecting Cal Township.
15 It's unfair for the trustee and her staff to
16 continue to work numbers and do things and
17 make cuts and do stuff and can't have
18 everyday working because we got to pinch
19 pennies to make sure that people get
20 services when everybody in part of the
21 township should be doing their fair share.
22 And I'm just saying I don't think everybody
23 is doing their fair share outside of the
24 township. Okay.

25 MR. PIGGEE: Yes, sir.

1 CHAIRMAN WASHINGTON: Okay. Ms. Holmes,
2 do you have anything else?

3 MS. HOLMES: No.

4 MS. ROBINSON: And I just wanted to add,
5 Mr. Washington, you remember when you fought
6 very hard against the tax caps and that
7 whole fiasco when the mills had great
8 lobbyists down there, so that they cannot be
9 charging as much for their personal
10 property. So we lost a lot of money with
11 that.

12 MR. PIGGEE: Yes, we did.

13 MS. ROBINSON: But we're doing the best
14 we can with what we have. And so we're
15 not -- I don't have anything personal
16 against Griffith. I just know that I think
17 we're at a point where once they have done
18 this, they can't continue to keep, you know,
19 doing referendums, keep going to their
20 community.

21 MR. PIGGEE: Exactly.

22 MS. ROBINSON: And I'm also looking into
23 where we should be now as far as that 12
24 times goes because that was the point of it.
25 And you're right, once we passed it, got

1 through it, stayed under it, then they set
2 the bar higher --

3 CHAIRMAN WASHINGTON: Yep.

4 MS. ROBINSON: -- with a whole different
5 calculation. So it's just an argument
6 that's almost coming to an end because they
7 don't really have any more cards to play on
8 it. And I'll be glad if it does.

9 That's why I was happy -- I was excited
10 when I thought they were going to get what
11 they were truly asking for, but it kind of
12 reversed on them and so --

13 CHAIRMAN WASHINGTON: Another thing,
14 Ms. Robinson, and for the public, those top
15 caps -- tax caps are coming available in
16 2020, and it's going to hurt municipalities
17 that haven't adequately prepared for them.
18 And that's one of the reasons why the other
19 two townships told Griffith no. And I just
20 don't think -- again, Ms. Robinson, you're
21 right. When somebody tells you they don't
22 want you, okay --

23 MS. ROBINSON: You got to believe them.

24 CHAIRMAN WASHINGTON: But I agree with
25 Ms. Robinson. When someone tells you they

1 don't want you, you don't keep begging them
2 to stay or come back. So we're going to
3 give Griffith an opportunity. And if they
4 still want to go, then they can go, but
5 unfortunately, I think they're going to have
6 to stay.

7 MR. PIGGEE: I do too.

8 CHAIRMAN WASHINGTON: And you know, it's
9 better to stay with somebody who can help
10 you out --

11 MR. PIGGEE: Exactly.

12 CHAIRMAN WASHINGTON: -- than to stay
13 with somebody that like, well, you don't
14 want to really be here in the first place.
15 So that's a different story.

16 Okay. Chair would like to entertain a
17 motion for adjournment for this evening's
18 meeting.

19 MR. PIGGEE: So move.

20 CHAIRMAN WASHINGTON: All in favor
21 signify by saying aye.

22 MR. PIGGEE: Aye.

23 MS. HOLMES: Aye.

24 CHAIRMAN WASHINGTON: All opposed say
25 nay. The ayes have it. Have a nice

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evening, everyone.

(TOWNSHIP MEETING CONCLUDED AT 4:50 P.M.)

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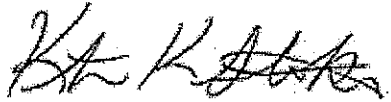
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4 THE CALUMET TOWNSHIP BOARD MEETING
 5 GARY, INDIANA

6
 7 REPORTER'S CERTIFICATE
 8

9 I, KRISTEN K. STOKES, CSR, Notary Public in
 10 and for the County of Lake, State of Indiana, do
 11 hereby certify that I reported in machine shorthand
 12 the foregoing proceedings had in the above-entitled
 13 matter, at the time and place herein set forth; and
 14 I do further certify that the foregoing transcript,
 15 is a true and correct transcript of my said
 16 stenographic notes.

17
 18 Signed this 4th day of March, 2019.


19
 20 

21 KRISTEN K. STOKES
 22 CSR# 084-003723
 23 My Commission Expires: 8/27/23
 24 Notary Public: Lake County, Indiana
 25

1 STATE OF INDIANA)
) SS:
2 COUNTY OF LAKE)

3 THE CALUMET TOWNSHIP BOARD MEETING
4 GARY, INDIANA

5
6
7 These minutes of the Calumet Township Board
8 meeting held on February 18, 2019, were approved by
9 the Board of Trustees on the 23rd day of
10 April, 2019.

11
12 
13 _____
Darren Washington, Board Chairman

14
15 _____
James Piggee, Board Member

16
17 
18 _____
Jacqueline Holmes, Board Secretary

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