

Pike Township Trustee Board Meeting Minutes

Date: October 21, 2025

Location: Pike Township Government Center

Call to Order

The meeting was called to order with a quorum present by President Claudette Peterson.

Public Hearing – Additional Appropriation

The board opened a public hearing regarding a proposed **\$205,000 additional appropriation** for Township Assistance, specifically for direct assistance in **shelter and utilities**.

Key Points from Board Discussion:

- The current township budget through September had spent 89% of the shelter budget and 84% of the utility budget.
- The proposed appropriation ensures sufficient funds to meet the needs of residents for the remainder of the year.
- Appropriations may also cover other needs in the “other direct relief” category, including food, clothing, shoes, transportation, and new baby assistance.
- Funds are flexible across these categories as long as the total category budget is not exceeded.

Public Comment Highlights:

- Residents raised concerns about past rejected applications and expressed a desire for clearer community outreach regarding available services.
- Board members clarified that all applicants meeting eligibility requirements receive assistance, and funds that remain unspent at year-end revert to the township fund.
- Residents were assured that no one is turned away from assistance programs and outreach efforts include HOA meetings, community events, brochures, and workshops.

The public hearing was closed after addressing questions.

Approval of Previous Meeting Minutes

- The board reviewed and approved the minutes from September 2nd and September 16th, 2025, with amendments as noted.

2026 Budget Discussion

- The board discussed the 2026 budget and salary resolutions.
- Salary Resolution:
 - Pike Township Board members' annual compensation set at \$12,860.64, plus \$8,000 for health insurance.
 - Board members are eligible for participation in the Indiana Public Employees Retirement Fund (PERF).
- Adjustments to Budget Appropriations:
 - Tech Support Specialist position (\$65,000) removed.
 - Fire Chief salary reduced by \$7,194 to align with resolution.
 - Cumulative Building and Equipment Fund reduced by \$365,000 due to inadequate justification for certain expenditures (e.g., kitchen remodel and furniture).
 - \$15,000 designated for independent legal counsel.

Discussion Points:

- Board clarified the difference between budget placeholder amounts and the salary resolution, noting approval of the budget does not automatically authorize salaries.
- Members questioned justification for benefits such as health insurance for board members; comparisons were made to other townships in the county where similar benefits are provided.
- Board affirmed all adjustments comply with Indiana Code 36-6-6.

Township Assistance Follow-Up

- Case worker provided a brief overview of ongoing assistance programs and confirmed that records of approvals and rejections are maintained in the annual TA7 report.
- Clarification provided regarding flexibility of the \$205,000 appropriation across multiple categories.
- Residents were encouraged to contact the township office to discuss individual cases or concerns.

Other Business

- Discussion about phase 2 environmental study for township property deferred due to need for landowner approval.
- Clarifications regarding salary resolutions, benefits, and comparisons to other townships were made during the meeting.

Firefighter Overtime and Contract Discussion

- Board members inquired about previous concerns regarding firefighter overtime, specifically how the regular rate was being calculated.
- Chief and staff clarified that issues from January 2023 were resolved, and there are no ongoing disputes.
- Board emphasized that rumors regarding consolidation with Indianapolis Fire Department (IFD) are false, and no board member supports dismantling Pike Township Fire or EMS services.
- The board expressed appreciation for firefighter and EMS personnel and confirmed commitment to supporting them financially and operationally.

Salary Resolution, Benefits, and Budget Clarifications

- The salary resolution covers base salaries but does not include PERF (pension) or health insurance, as these were not in the advertised budget.
- Additional appropriations for benefits may be pursued in 2026 through a separate process, as they cannot be added to the current advertised budget.
- Board members acknowledged that the budget remains under estimates, ensuring financial prudence.
- Trustee Johnson confirmed efforts toward transparency and fiscal responsibility, including annual audits and public reporting.

2026 Budget Approval

- The board reviewed adjustments for the 2026 budget, including:
 - General Fund: \$2,724,688
 - Township Assistance: \$1,517,400
 - Fire and EMS: \$52,520,134
 - Cumulative Fire Fund: \$940,000
 - **Total: \$57,722,222**
- A motion to approve the 2026 budget was made, seconded, and passed unanimously.
- Trustee Johnson and board members emphasized the need for ongoing monitoring and collaboration to ensure balanced allocation of taxpayer funds.

Board Transparency and Process

- Discussion highlighted past challenges with previous boards where budgets were “rubber-stamped.”
- Current board members emphasized active oversight, accountability, and checks and balances.
- Trustee Johnson acknowledged tension but confirmed commitment to open dialogue and transparency, including public meetings, accessible records, and community engagement.

Fire Department Report (September 2025, Year-to-Date)

- Total incidents: 11,088
 - EMS: 9,029 (81.4%)
 - Fire: 1,631 (14.7%)
 - Other: 428 (3.9%)
- Two paramedic positions remain open; recruitment ongoing.
- Community Risk Reduction Specialist began public education programs in schools.
- New vehicles placed into service: Medic 61, Medic 65, and replacement Engine 62; Ladder 64 pending inspection (Nov 6).
- Security system upgrade bid awarded; new ambulance bid pending.
- Eight conditional offers extended for upcoming retirements, aligned with a Department of Workforce Development grant.
- Community Resource Paramedic program presented at the Indiana Township Association (ITA) conference with positive reception.

Trustee Report

- Trustee Johnson emphasized **community outreach**, transparency, and accountability:
 - Township website, meeting agendas, and minutes publicly accessible.
 - Engagement in festivals, school programs, and public education.
 - Presentation at ITA conference recognized Pike Township as a model township.
- Trustee highlighted efforts to maintain IT support for 24/7 fire stations, ensuring operational continuity.
- Trustee confirmed all township operations are audited annually with clean results.

Community Engagement Reports

- Board members reported on district outreach and community programs:
 - Town halls: Hosted multi-level government meetings (state to federal) to engage residents.
 - Pack the Pantry initiative: Collected 2,000+ items to support local families.
 - Lunch with Santa: Planned holiday support for 100 families in Pike Township.
 - Partnerships with local organizations, schools, and Bosma for employment and internship programs.
 - Board members actively participate in HOA meetings, volunteer efforts, and public education events.

Legal Contract

- Discussion regarding the law firm contract deferred to the next meeting, as it was added after the original agenda distribution.

The next meeting is scheduled for November 12th at 6:00 p.m.

Meeting Adjourned.

Tom Hogg

Secretary of the Board

Attested By: