

**Fallen Timbers Union Cemetery District
Waterville Township, Village of Whitehouse, City of Waterville
Special Joint Meeting
City Council Chamber – Waterville Municipal Building – Waterville, OH
6:00pm May 12th, 2025**

CALL TO ORDER – PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE – ROLL CALL

Meeting called to order at 6:00pm by Waterville Mayor Timothy Pedro

Whitehouse Council Members Present: Mayor Rich Bingham, Louann Artiaga, Steve Fine, Steve Connelly and Larry Yunker

Whitehouse Council Members Absent: Dave Riegenbach, Carrie Tuohy

Whitehouse Staff Present: Council Clerk Nicole Hartbarger

Waterville Township Trustees Present: Kim Anderson, Julie Theroux

City of Waterville Council Members Present: Mayor Timothy Pedro, Mary Duncan, John Rozic, Wayne Wagner, Todd Borowski

City of Waterville Council Members Absent: Anthony Bruno

Others Present: Jon Gochenour, Rory Hartbarger, Tiffany Bachman, Phil Dombey, Jeanne Taylor

Pledge of Allegiance was recited.

APPROVAL OF MINUTES – SPECIAL JOINT MEETING, MAY 13th, 2024

Mayor Pedro asked for a motion to approve the minutes of the last Special Joint meeting of the Fallen Timbers Union Cemetery District on May 13th, 2024.

Motion made by John Rozic, seconded by Louann Artiaga to approve the May 13th, 2024 minutes. All in favor.

ELECT CEMETERY BOARD TRUSTEE: WATERVILLE TOWNSHIP, VILLAGE OF WHITEHOUSE

Mayor Pedro explained that we are ready to hear nominations from Waterville Township to fill the full three-year term that runs from 1/1/2026 to 12/31/2028.

Kim Anderson nominates Julie Theroux for the upcoming open term.

Kim Anderson made a motion to accept the nomination and appoint Julie Theroux as the Waterville Township FTUCD Trustee for the 1/1/2026 to 12/31/2028 term, seconded by Wayne Wagner. All in favor.

Mayor Pedro asks for a nomination from Village of Whitehouse to replace Louann Artiaga in her current term expiring on December 31st, 2026.

Mayor Bingham nominates Larry Yunker for the open position.

Mayor Bingham made a motion to accept the nomination and appoint Larry Yunker as the Village of Whitehouse FTUCD Trustee for the remainder of the open position, through December 31st, 2026, seconded by Steve Connelly. All in favor.

ADOPT 2026 CEMETERY APPROPRIATIONS

Tiffany Bachman shares that this review of appropriations is like previous years. They are working on some projects currently and additional costly situations have come up that need to be handled. She comments that they do work hard to complete everything in a low-cost manner. Bachman shares that last year multiple tree removals were done along with the last of the repayments to City of Waterville and Village of Whitehouse. Not many projects were done last year, in 2024, to increase the balance carry over to this year. Bachman comments that some 2025 projects have been completed so far and others will carry into 2026. This is the reason for appropriations. Steve Fine asks about the 2024 revenue and expenditures along

with the 2025 budget; he says the 2024 balance is different than the starting 2025 balance. Bachman comments she is typically preparing these appropriation reports in advance, the amount for starting balance is exact, the ending amount is an estimate. Rozic asks about machine expenses and anticipated purchases. Rory Hartbarger shares that one thing they have been doing is contracting out for the opening and closings, this person has a backhoe and dump truck – they are looking to purchase these machines to own in-house but would need an operator to go along with these. They are looking for the right time to purchase along with taking the time to develop someone to utilize the machinery. Hartbarger comments they are looking to address drainage issues. They did not want to make a purchase and the machinery just sit there, putting the money aside for the future. Rozic asks about the increase in salaries and decrease in contract services. Anderson comments it is their hope to make the sexton and his assistant as full-time, non-contract, employees. They have always been on contract and going forward will be on salary. Waterville legal pointed out tariff negotiations, costs of machinery could sky rocket and may need to account for that in future budget discussions.

Motion by Mary Duncan, seconded by Rich Bingham to adopt the proposed 2026 Cemetery Appropriations. All in favor.

SET PROPERTY TAX MILLAGE FOR 2026

Tiffany Bachman comments that adding contract employees as full-time employees will come at a necessary cost. There are other new costs for 2026 including addressing drainage issues in Wakeman. Wagner asks how much this increase will generate. Bachman comments she is not exactly sure, waiting on valuations to come in – valuations did increase some this year. Pedro comments that when the district was developed years ago lots of time was put in by the board, there was a frugal study done and now we are reaching some momentum. These are minor costs to take care of the burying of our fellow citizens. Pedro comments they need to keep costs as low as possible but it is low comparable to other cemeteries. Fine asks if these increases are something we will look at every year. Duncan comments there will be a small increase in years to account for increase in employee salaries – there were a lot of costs/expenses that went out this year but will not necessarily be a big expense going forward like tree maintenance – will keep as low as the group can. Duncan comments the sexton has done a great job negotiating on costs.

Motion by Wayne Wagner, seconded by Louann Artiaga to accept the proposed increase in millage from 0.5 to 0.6 for 2026. All in favor.

RECOMMENDATION FOR CHANGE IN FEE

Sexton Hartbarger shares that the district has held the same burial rates for the last five years that he has been involved with the district. These are the lowest rates around the area. All in attendance have been presented with a proposed rate sheet. Hartbarger comments weekends are being chosen mostly, over week days and there is a difference in price. Looking to increase just the cremation rate. Rozic asks about disinterment, Hartbarger says this has not occurred since he has been involved. Hartbarger says a rate may not need to be put in for disinterment because of the very minimal use.

Motion by Rich Bingham, seconded by John Rozic to accept the proposed fees to reflect all rate increases as suggested. All in favor.

OTHER ITEMS OF MUTUAL INTEREST

Mayor Pedro defers to Vice Mayor Mary Duncan.

Duncan shares her thanks to Artiaga for her years of service on the district – have enjoyed working with her, very easy to work with. Artiaga thanks all for the opportunity to serve on the board – unfortunately has had some life changes forcing her to step back but has truly enjoyed the time spent on this board. Pedro comments that this is an example of volunteer efforts that make this a great team. He thanks Artiaga very much for her dedication.

Mayor Pedro comments that the next Joint FTUCD meeting will be May 2026.

Hartbarger asks if all get a minute to please drive by the cemeteries. There is new signage up in all five in the district. There is a QR code to review rules and regulations. Hartbarger shares that the Memorial Day services will be in both Whitehouse at Veterans Memorial Park and in Waterville at Wakeman Cemetery. Whitehouse at 10am, Waterville at 11am. Pedro encourages all to attend the services and remember the veterans in our community.

Pedro comments he had a chance to attend the dedication of the new bridge in Whitehouse. Commends Whitehouse for the organization of that event. Pedro comments there was a tree at Sgt. Eckert's grave that fell down weeks ago and Hartbarger pulled a team together to plant a tree immediately for it to be there when the family was in attendance – Sons of the American Legion donated funding for the tree and clean-up of his memorial along with the FTUCD supporting.

Artiaga comments also about the improvements in the cemeteries, asks all to take a drive through and review all the updates Hartbarger has been able to make recently. Lots of updates to buildings, trash receptacles, and trees removed. The amount of work coordinated over the last few months has been amazing. Does not know how the district would operate without Hartbarger's participation.

Anderson comments that this has been a very easy team to work with, and it has been a pleasure. Can not say enough praise for Hartbarger and Bachman.

ADJOURNMENT

Motion by Louann Artiaga, seconded by Kim Anderson to adjourn the meeting at 6:27pm. All in favor.

Respectfully submitted by Nicole Hartbarger, Clerk of Council