MINUTES FOR THE TOWN OF SPRING GROVE

November 11, 2025

HELD AT QUAKER HILL CONFERENCE CENTER AT 7:00PM.

Board members present included Doug Brenneke, Zane Carrell, Annemarie Chasteen, Lisa VanDevender and Robert Erbse.

Also present were attorney AJ Sickmann, Planning Commissioner Jeff Holthouse, and Clerk-Treasurer Jenney Holthouse.

Minutes from the October meeting were presented. Mr. Carrell moved to approve; Ms. Chasteen seconded. All in favor.

Mr. Sickmann reported on the materials he had e-distributed regarding the Richmond Endodontics sign request. The request does meet all ordinance requirements. Mr. Sickmann reported that the board can require a permit or the sign could be permitted through a board vote. Mr. Carrell moved to approve the sign; Ms. Chasteen seconded; all in favor. Mr. Sickmann will let Richmond Endodontics know that they can proceed with the sign.

Ms. Holthouse presented October financials as emailed to board members.

Ms. Holthouse reported that the state audit of 2021 – 2024 has been completed, pending next week's exit conference and receipt of the formal report. The auditor has sent Teams invites to all board members to participate in the exit conference if desired; Ms. Holthouse encouraged all to participate if possible. She reported that the prior audit performed in 2022 had several items that were, at that time, agreed to with the state. Some of those items had not been addressed, so that this audit will have the same findings. These include:

- A separate (restricted) Motor Vehicles Fund is required to be established to be used for paving and other specified uses, not including maintenance. Ms. Holthouse has established this fund. For compliance, 50% of the Motor Vehicle Excise Tax received through October 2025, totaling $5,892.30, must be moved into that account, and half of all future receipts of MVET will be deposited into that fund. She requested that the board approve the fund transfer. Mr. Carrell moved; Ms. Chasteen seconded; all in favor.
- The town is required to prepare a receipt for all revenue that posts to the bank. Ms. Holthouse has created and received approval of the receipt form and has begun to update 2025 records for those receipts, per the auditor's instruction.
- Internal Control training is required (per Ms. Holthouse's email to all board members). She has completed the training, as have several board members, so the town will be in compliance next audit, but that will be a discrepancy on the current audit.
- Independent contractors must have approved contracts approved by the board before receiving payment. This, too, is a finding that was not corrected since the previous audit. The board would like clarification whether ordinance 2024-02, establishing a $1,000 threshold for needed maintenance, for which the planning commission president can move forward without board approval, violates this requirement, or if the related signed proposals would be sufficient. Ms. Holthouse will follow up with the auditor for more specifics
- Other findings that were specific to this audit period:
  - No records were found substantiating the Quaker Hill rent payment in 2022.
  - The town cannot reimburse for sales tax, so any reimbursements to board members must not include the sales tax, or the board member can use an exemption form to make the purchase.
  - When ARPA funds were received in 2021, a separate federal grant filing should have been included with the Annual Financial Report, and it was not, nor were any of the related ARPA expenses reported. All ARPA funds were spent prior to the end of 2024, so this will not be applicable in future audits unless something similar happens in the future.
  - The First Merchants CDs were incorrectly reported to the state as cash rather than investments.
  - Also regarding the CD, a government cannot "roll" the investment over; instead, a CD must be allowed to mature, the interest recorded at that time, and then reinvested if desired. The CD was cashed out in early 2024, so these two items will not be applicable unless the town invests in CDs again in the future.

For the current snow contract, the board decided to proceed with Rinehart's for snow removal for this year. Mr. Carrell moved to accept the presented contract; Ms. Chasteen seconded; all in favor. Mr. Erbe mentioned the trees that were supposed to be cut; Rinehart's has been contacted several times and it will be taken care of.

The proposed 2026 fire contract with the city of Richmond was discussed. Ms. Holthouse pointed out the legal notice for tax rates show that Spring Grove and Richmond proper have zero tax collected for Fire & EMS; Richmond has adjusted Wayne Township's fire contract to the amount they will receive for their tax levy, which is a reduction of the amount calculated on the city's spreadsheet. Spring Grove's total assessed value 2026 to 2025 decreased by approximately $2 million. The board asked AJ to explore implementing a levy to cover fire services. Mr. Sickmann reported that in the past, he has been told that even without a contract, fire service would be provided. The board agreed that something should be paid, but that the calculations should be more equitable. Ms. Chasteen will work on obtaining info regarding Spring Grove's exempt vs. non-exempt properties in comparison to Richmond and Wayne Township. Mr. Holthouse offered to speak to Richmond Mayor Ron Oler regarding the calculation and, moving forward, limiting annual increases to a pre-set maximum. The board agreed.

The December meeting will be moved to 6pm.

With no further business, Mr. Carrell moved to adjourn, Ms. VanDevender seconded. All in favor. Meeting was adjourned at 7:40 pm.