

## **'Steadfast' township trustee retires**

By Gary Budzak - December 26, 2025



GALENA — “Do you have anything else?” asked longtime Harlem Township Trustee Dave Jackson an hour into last week’s meeting on Dec. 17.

“We certainly do,” said Fire Chief Thomas O’Brien. “Will you come on up here?”

“What’s going on, dude?” Jackson said, leaving his chair to join O’Brien in front of the audience.

“And then if I can get any current or former employees, trustees or anything to come up here and join us as well, please,” O’Brien said.

Jackson’s wife, Belinda, took his arm, and more than a dozen current and former staff members stood alongside Jackson as O’Brien read.

“In recognition for 28 years of dedicated service as a Harlem Township trustee, your steadfast leadership, integrity, and commitment have made a lasting impact on the community you have always served,” O’Brien said. “With deepest appreciation from past and present residents and employees.”

“Thank you all,” Jackson said simply, as he received a plaque, and all applauded.

O’Brien also gave Jackson a Harlem Township t-shirt.

“While you’re gone, so you don’t forget where you came from, with your name on it, too. Thank you,” O’Brien said, as he shook Jackson’s hand. Cake was mentioned while the crowd broke up and returned to their seats.

“All right, let’s try this again,” Jackson said, with his usual calm demeanor.

“While Dave is retiring from his Trustee career, we’re very grateful that he’s agreed to continue to be a subject matter expert for the Township, sharing his important institutional knowledge,” the township posted on Facebook.

His fellow trustees said that Jackson's knowledge extends to subjects such as road maintenance and working with the county.

"Dave is a grain farmer and is a lifelong resident of Harlem," said the township's website. "He has been a trustee since 1997 and previously served on the Zoning Board of Appeals for several years. Dave is currently a member of the Delaware County Soil Conservation Service and a member of the advisory board for ditch petitions. Dave and his wife Belinda continue to reside on the same farm where Dave was born and raised."

With the recognition out of the way, Jackson quickly turned to public comment.

A Fancher Road resident felt that the proposed Strategic Plan's language was "too dense" and wanted as "minimal" commercial and residential density as was legally feasible.

In response, the resident was told the township's Steering Committee spent extensive time defining what is low, moderate, and concentrated density. The term "appropriate density" was also discarded because it was too loose, while "minimal" was considered too restrictive.

It was also said the township's Zoning Resolution is the legally binding document, while the Strategic Plan was a proposal that was still in process and hasn't been finalized. In addition, it was said the Zoning Resolution is constantly being discussed and updated as needed. It also describes maximum densities.

Lastly, it was said Jackson had started discussions with Rumpke regarding trash pickup to become a preferred township. That means there is no obligation to go with Rumpke, but if so, it would cost residents \$21 a month, lower than what many are currently paying. A 95-gallon container would be provided, and if there was enough demand (200 residents), biweekly recycling could also be offered.

"Anything else?" Jackson said. "We have a motion to adjourn. All in favor, say aye. Meeting adjourned. Thank you, folks." He then grabbed his jacket to leave.

Harlem hosts

- The trustee meetings are in the Harlem Township Fire Station, 3883 S. S.R. 605, Galena. For more information, visit [www.harlemtwp.com](http://www.harlemtwp.com) (website), Harlem Township Government (Facebook).