

Township Subcommittee Report and Recommendation

To the Richland Township-Town of Ellettsville Reorganization Board

The Township Subcommittee recommends that Richland Township and the Town of Ellettsville move forward with consolidation under Indiana Code 36-1.5, with Richland Township being consolidated into the reorganized Town of Ellettsville.

This report is the Township Subcommittee's formal recommendation on how township duties and services will continue after consolidation and where those responsibilities will be placed within the reorganized town government.

Overall Recommendation

The subcommittee recommends that, on the effective date of reorganization:

1. Richland Township will no longer operate as a separate unit of government, and the Township Trustee and Township Board will be abolished as separate township offices.
2. Required township services will continue through the reorganized Town of Ellettsville.
3. The reorganized Town will create a Department of Public Assistance as a separate town department to carry forward township assistance and related township-service functions.

Purpose of the Department of Public Assistance

The Department of Public Assistance will continue township assistance and other transferred township-service duties in a clear, accountable structure within the reorganized Town.

- The department will operate as a town department, funded through the town budget.
- The reorganized Ellettsville Town Council will provide legislative and fiscal oversight through the town's normal budgeting and claims processes.
- The Director of Public Assistance will be responsible for administration, program operations, and day-to-day management of the department within the policies and budget approved by the Town Council.

Director / Trustee Transition

The subcommittee recommends that the elected Richland Township Trustee in office at the time of reorganization become the initial Director of Public Assistance during the transition year to ensure continuity of leadership and services.

After the transition year, the Director of Public Assistance position will continue as a professional appointed department-head position. If a vacancy occurs, the reorganized Ellettsville Town Council will fill the position using the town's standard hiring process and applicable policies.

Fiscal Budget and Staffing Plan

The subcommittee recommends a \$530,000 transition-year budget for 2027 for the Department of Public Assistance.

This \$530,000 includes all salaries for department staff and all costs necessary to carry out the duties and services outlined in this report, including operating costs, direct public assistance costs, pantry operations, legal and professional services, travel and reimbursement, vehicle and fuel, and related support costs.

The 2027 staffing for the Department of Public Assistance will be:

- Director of Public Assistance
- Office Manager
- Case Worker
- Part-Time Pantry Worker

The subcommittee recommends that these staffing levels and associated funding remain in place for the 2027 reorganization year to avoid disruption of services. Any staffing changes after the transition year should be recommended by the Director based on operational need and approved through the town's normal budget and staffing approval process.

Accountant / Deputy Trustee Transition

The subcommittee recommends that the current Accountant / Deputy Trustee position, currently one person in the township office, will transition into the reorganized Town as one full-time Deputy Clerk position under the Clerk-Treasurer.

This position will support the increased workload in the Clerk-Treasurer's office following consolidation, including:

- Accounts payable
- Payroll
- Other added fiscal and administrative work created by consolidation

Funding for this position will be included in the Clerk-Treasurer's budget, not in the Department of Public Assistance budget.

Township Assistance and Public Assistance Services

The Department of Public Assistance will continue township assistance and related services residents currently rely on, including:

- Township assistance
- Emergency help with basic needs
- Food and pantry services
- Delivery support for homebound residents when applicable
- Burial assistance and related assistance services
- Other public assistance functions required by law or included in local standards

The subcommittee recommends no interruption in service due to reorganization. Pantry services, emergency assistance, and support for low-income, elderly, homebound, and vulnerable residents must continue without a gap.

For clarity and continuity, the subcommittee recommends that the former boundaries of Richland Township remain the service area for these assistance services so eligible residents do not lose access during the reorganization year or in subsequent years.

Other Township Functions and All Township Duties

Cemeteries

All cemetery maintenance, mowing, and upkeep will be assigned to the Parks Department.

Baseball Fields and Park Grounds

Mowing and general grounds work for baseball fields and park areas will be assigned to the Parks Department. Utilities, landscaping, and park-related expenses will be budgeted within parks, or the appropriate receiving department, and not within the Department of Public Assistance.

Weed Control and Detrimental Plant Enforcement

Weed control and detrimental plant enforcement will be assigned to the Director of Public Assistance as part of the transferred township-service functions after consolidation.

Fence Viewer Duties

Fence viewer duties will be assigned to the Director of Public Assistance as part of the transferred township-service functions after consolidation.

Fire Protection

Any township fire-related obligations, contracts, equipment arrangements, and funding responsibilities will transfer to the reorganized Town of Ellettsville and continue under the public safety structure established in the master plan. Existing interlocal arrangements and equipment funding flows will be honored and continued according to their terms, with details addressed in the full reorganization plan.

Parks and Community Center

Any township park or community-center responsibilities will be assigned to the town's parks and recreation structure and clearly listed in the final plan.

Records, Property, and Financial Administration

Township records, contracts, assets, and liabilities will transfer to the reorganized Town and be assigned to the appropriate receiving departments, including but not limited to Fire, Police, Planning, Public Works, Clerk-Treasurer, and Parks.

Continuous Service and Employee Transition

The subcommittee recommends that duties and lines of responsibility remain in effect during the transition unless and until formally changed by the reorganized Town Council through the normal policy or ordinance process. This keeps operations stable and reduces service disruptions.

The subcommittee also recommends that, when lawful, preference be given to current township and town employees for positions that continue or are created under the reorganized structure. Future hiring will follow the reorganized town's established hiring policies.

Final Recommendation

For these reasons, the Township Subcommittee recommends that Richland Township and the Town of Ellettsville consolidate into the reorganized Town of Ellettsville and adopt the following recommendations as part of the final Plan of Reorganization:

1. Consolidate Richland Township into the reorganized Town of Ellettsville and abolish the Township Trustee and Township Board as separate township offices on the effective date.
2. Create a Department of Public Assistance as a separate town department.
3. Place the current elected trustee into the transition role of Director of Public Assistance during the transition year, with the position continuing as a professional appointed department-head position thereafter.
4. Adopt a \$530,000 transition-year budget for 2027 for the Department of Public Assistance, which includes all staff salaries and all costs necessary to perform the duties and services outlined in this report.
5. Maintain the following 2027 staffing for the Department of Public Assistance: Director of Public Assistance, Office Manager, Case Worker, and Part-Time Pantry Worker.
6. Transition the current Accountant / Deputy Trustee role into one full-time Deputy Clerk position under the Clerk-Treasurer, funded within the Clerk-Treasurer's budget, to support accounts payable, payroll, and increased workload.
7. Transfer cemetery maintenance and baseball field mowing to the Parks Department.
8. Assign weed control and detrimental plant enforcement, as well as fence viewer duties, to the Director of Public Assistance.
9. Continue fire-related obligations under the public safety structure established in the master plan.
10. Ensure all township records, contracts, assets, liabilities, and remaining township responsibilities are transferred to the reorganized Town and assigned to the appropriate departments.
11. Maintain township services without interruption during the reorganization year and in subsequent years.