

Wheatland Township Board Meeting Thursday, December 8, 2022

1. CALL TO ORDER

The meeting was called to order by Clerk Liskey at 7:30 PM.

2. PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE

Cemetery Board Member Jim Hofman led the Pledge of Allegiance.

3. ROLL CALL AND ESTABLISHMENT OF A QUORUM

Board Members: Trustees Hickey, Jones and Bansal attended the meeting. Trustee Rotkis was absent.

Board Officers: Supervisor Crowner, Assessor Kern, Highway Commissioner Wieser, and Clerk Liskey attended the meeting. Cemetery Board Member Jim Hofman attended on behalf of Tax Collector Scriven-Young who was absent.

4. PUBLIC COMMENT

4.1 n/a

5. APPROVAL OF MINUTES

5.1 Approve November 10, 2022 – Regular Meeting Open Session Minutes

-Trustee Hickey moved to open discussion and approval of the Regular Meeting Open Session Minutes. Trustee Bansal seconded. Minutes for the November 10, 2022, Regular Meeting Open Session were approved 4-0 per roll call vote.

6. OLD BUSINESS

6.1 n/a

7. NEW BUSINESS

7.1 Discussion/Approval of Tax Levy for Truth in Taxation Law for Town Fund

-Supervisor Crowner motioned to open discussion of the tax levy for the Town Fund and Trustee Hickey seconded.

- Supervisor Crowner outlined a recommended 4.9 percent increase to the Town Fund tax levy. Crediting several successful contract renegotiations that have resulted in more favorable terms and reduced costs, he explained Wheatland Township was in a stronger financial position, allowing it to cover additional expenses for annual staff salary increases, higher insurance fees and an increase in the 2023 Assessor's budget without a significant increase to the Town Fund levy.

-Of note, the proposed levy increase is less than the higher operational costs anticipated for 2023. However, due to effective cost-management initiatives and efficiency improvement strategies employed in 2022, Wheatland Township has been able to grow its reserve funds and is now well positioned to maintain operations with only a minimal increase to the Town Fund levy in 2023.

- The Board approved the Tax Levy for Truth in Taxation Law for the Town Fund 4-0 via rollcall vote.

7.2 Discussion/Approval of Tax Levy for Truth in Taxation Law for Road District Fund

- Supervisor Crowner motioned to open discussion of the tax levy for the Road District and Trustee Hickey seconded the motion.
- In opening remarks, Supervisor Crowner detailed the recommendation for a 4.9 percent increase for the Road District Fund levy, explaining that the Road District's larger operating budget had enough reserve funds to cover any additional costs above 4 percent with only a minimal increase to its levy.
- As with the Town Fund, prudent fiscal management by the Road District in 2022 have resulted in strong reserve funds will enable it to maintain operations with only a slight increase to its levy that is less than the higher operational costs projected for next year.
- The Board approved the Tax Levy for Truth in Taxation Law for Road District Fund 4-0 via rollcall vote.

7.5 Discussion/Approval 2023 Pace Paratransit Local Share Agreement Contract

- Supervisor Crowner motioned to open discussions to approve the 2023 Pace Paratransit Local Share Agreement and Trustee Hickey seconded the motion.
- Confirming the new contract would extend the positive terms and cost reductions renegotiated in 2022, Supervisor Crowner noted the only change would be an increased subsidy for Pace, estimated to be between \$20k - \$30k as determined by ridership and significantly lower than \$60k-plus charges paid in previous years.
- In response to Trustee Bansal's inquiry, Supervisor Crowner confirmed there was a slight increase in ridership in 2022. He further explained Wheatland Township subsidized rides for seniors and special needs residents, noting most the program's costs are covered by federal grants.
- Trustee Hickey noted ongoing issues with the supplemental Uber services provided by Pace to offset disruptions due to labor shortages. In response, Supervisor Crowner confirmed he would instruct Pace to specify covered zip codes for the Uber drivers.
- The Board approved the Pace Paratransit Local Share Agreement contract 4-0 via rollcall vote.

8. APPROVAL OF BILLS AND CLAIMS

8.1 Approval of 11/10/22 – 12/08/22 Town and Road District Fund Bills & Claims:

- Trustee Bansal moved to open discussion to approve the Town, Park, Assessor, Road & Bridge, Special Hard Road and Cemetery Fund bills, and Trustee Hickey seconded the motion.
- Bills in the amount of \$173,584.76 were approved by the Board 4-0 in a roll call vote.

9. REPORTS

9.1. ASSESSOR (CHUCK KERN)

- Reported he had attended the Annual Assessors Meeting in Joliet along with the new assessor.
- Updated he would present the new Assessor's Office budget at the January meeting.
- Informed that because the tech vendor had sent a number of monthly invoices to an incorrect address, itemized January disbursements will include a higher-than-normal charge of \$8,800 to cover the back-dated bills.
- Suggested that due to the rising interest rate environment, the Board consider implementing an investment strategy to purchase bank CDs and reinvest the earned interest in equipment and other supplies for the office, similar to a program in place at Lisle Township.

9.2 HIGHWAY COMMISSIONER (TOM WIESER)

- Reported on two budget issues that occurred during November. (1) Outstanding IDOT invoices for road repairs done at the intersection of Rt. 30 and 119th Street in 2016 had surfaced as unpaid. Though a check had been sent, it was never cashed due to issues at IDOT. The Road District had cancelled the old check and would pay the \$4,600 bill in January, using funds from contingency expenses.
- Updated that the Road District would reverse a decision to include an addendum to its insurance policy that would cover full bridge replacement in the event of natural disasters. After receiving feedback from other townships and discovering Will County maintained insurance to cover bridge damage over \$50k, he confirmed the added coverage would not be required.

9.3 TRUSTEES:

TRUSTEE (MEGHNA BANSAL)

- Reported that 17 seniors attended the November 16 Senior Luncheon, which was catered by Caputo's Market at a cost of \$190 (plus minor additional expenses for tea and ancillary items). Coffee was provided by Wheatland Church, and a speaker from the Illinois Dept. on Aging's Senior Health Insurance Program gave a presentation on Medicare.
- Noted the December Senior Holiday Lunch had been rescheduled for December 14.

TRUSTEE (KELLY HICKEY)

- Updated on clerical work being done by students from the Neuqua Valley High School Transition Program, noting the students continue to assist with the document/records clean up and disposal initiative and were also looking for other projects. She informed that because the program's office had relocated to a facility nearer to I-88, creating longer times and the need for a more flexible schedule.
- Reiterated ongoing efforts to address issues with the Uber supplemental rider program Pace was providing to prevent service disruptions.

TRUSTEE (COLLEEN ROTKIS)

- n/a

TRUSTEE (TERRY JONES)

- n/a

9.4 TOWNSHIP CLERK (ANITA LISKEY)

- Confirmed additional information to clarify a FOIA response had been provided in November and that no new inquiries had been received.
- Updated that the tech vendor would install a new shared drive for the Wheatland Township office during December and training would be scheduled for parties planning to use the site in January. Designed to increase and simplify access to Township files, shared documents and other information, the new site will improve organization and streamline records management processes within Wheatland Township.

TAX COLLECTOR/CEMETERY (DAVID SCRIVEN-YOUNG)

- On behalf of Tax Collector/Cemetery Scriven-Young who was unable to attend the meeting, Cemetery Board Member Jim Hofman reported that one internment had been completed in November and three grave sites had been sold.

- Updated that volunteers had winterized the cemetery by installing stakes on the corners of each plot so grave diggers could identify grave sites despite snow cover.
- Noted that flowers and other memorials collected in the fall clean-up were being held for 90 days and that any new grave adornments would remain through the holidays.

9.5 SUPERVISOR (MICHAEL CROWNER)

- Reminded Board officers to prepare their budget recommendations and considerations for upcoming discussions on 2023-2024 budget plans.
- Administrator/Deputy Clerk Green provided additional project updates, including:
 - A new Owl Labs recording technology was purchased/implemented to tape Wheatland Township board meetings in a format that could be posted/archived on the Township website for public viewing/reference.
 - A policy and procedure informational data base on Township Government was now available for Wheatland Township employees and elected officials.
 - Collections for Toys for Tots and a Holiday Food Drive were organized, with donations going to Wheatland Township residents in need of assistance.
 - Initiatives to improve safety within Wheatland Township office is underway. A new defibrillator was purchased with CPR/lifesaving training scheduled for employees and officials. Fire extinguishers were also installed throughout the office, and Naperville Fire will be on site to provide training on January 17.
 - Sam.gov troubleshooting efforts to enable the Township account to accept federal funds are in process.

10. ADJOURNMENT:

- Trustee Jones moved to adjourn the meeting and Trustee Hickey seconded the motion. The meeting was adjourned on a voice vote at 8:36 PM.

Next meeting January 12, 2023

Approved as presented:

Prepared by Anita Liskey, Township Clerk