

**Wheatland Township Board Meeting
Thursday, July 13, 2023**

1. CALL TO ORDER

The meeting was called to order by Supervisor Crowner

2. PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE

Wheatland Township Resident Michael Wisniewski led the Pledge of Allegiance.

3. ROLL CALL AND ESTABLISHMENT OF A QUORUM

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

Board Officers: Supervisor Crowner, Assessor Kern, Highway Commissioner Wieser, and Clerk Liskey attended the meeting. Cemetery/Tax Collector Scriven-Young was absent.

4. PUBLIC COMMENT

4.1 Michael Wisniewski, a Wheatland Township resident and former trustee, former park district and forestry official, raised four questions about the Board's decision to transfer management and maintenance of Wheatland Park to the Plainfield Park district via an intergovernmental agreement approved in the December 2022 Board meeting. Specific questions were: (1) What was the land value assessment? (2) Why was the proposal not on the agenda or presented at the 2022 annual meeting?

Noting the Board was not required to respond, Supervisor Crowner addressed Mr. Wisniewski's inquiry by first explaining that since the park was not sold for private use and would continue to be used as a community park, there was no need for an appraisal. He then confirmed that the decision to transfer the park to the Plainfield Park district was unanimously approved by the Board after thorough consideration of several factors that will benefit Wheatland Township residents. He also pointed out that the transfer proposal had been detailed and documented at many public Board meetings in 2022 and 2023, as well as in previous years by previous administrations. The factors behind the decision include:

1. **A bigger park with more accommodations for residents** - By combining Wheatland Park with the adjacent Plainfield Park, all residents will have access to a larger recreational facility that will better accommodate more visitors/usage, improved services, additional and enhanced equipment, expanded bike paths, and more.
2. **Cost savings and increased efficiencies** - A combined park will reduce maintenance redundancies, increase efficiencies, while providing improved services and facilities, better land use and increased value for taxpayers. Wheatland Park would require several substantial and expensive upgrades, including a need to repave the cracked basketball court, installation of new fencing, purchase repairs of equipment, etc. Wheatland Township does not employ staff to manage/maintain the park so all these initiatives, which are currently being done by employees of the road crew, not only posed an inefficient use of financial resources and human capital, but also required to take those employees away from their jobs of ensuring safe and well-maintained roads within the Township.

3. **More resources, increased capacity, and new grant funding** – The Plainfield Park District already has the necessary resources and capacity to maintain the park and has already secured additional grant funding to implement significant improvements, purchase new equipment and enhance services – which will benefit all area residents at no cost to Wheatland Township or taxpayers.
4. **Resource reallocation** – Since the park will no longer be budgeted expense, the Board will redirect those funds in other ways to benefit the communities served. Detailed development plans are available on the Plainfield Park District Website.

5. APPROVAL OF MINUTES

5.1 Approve June 8, 2023 – Regular Meeting Open Session Minutes

- Trustee Rotkis motioned to open discussion/approval of the minutes for the June 8 Regular Meeting Open Session. Trustee Jones seconded.
- The amended minutes for the June 8, 2023, Regular Meeting Open Session were unanimously approved 5-0 per roll call vote.

6. OLD BUSINESS

6.1 n/a

7. NEW BUSINESS

7.1 Discussion/Approval of #23-01-R Resolution Designating Freedom of Information Officers and Adopting Rules and Regulations Under the Freedom of Information Act

- Trustee Bansal motioned to open discussion/approval of #23-01-R Resolution to designate FOIA officers and adopt rules and regulations under the Freedom of Information Act. Trustee Hickey seconded the motion.
- Supervisor Crowner explained the need to update and adopt the new rules and regulations as required under the Freedom of Information Act, including the appointment of FOIA officers to cover inquiries (re) *various areas/topics within the Township as well as detailing the policies in a way that is more transparent, easily understandable, and also publicly available on the Wheatland Township Website*. The full resolution was read into the record by Supervisor Crowner and is attached as an addendum.
- The Board unanimously approved #23-01-R Resolution to designate FOIA officers and adopt rules and regulations under the Freedom of Information Act 5-0 via roll call vote.

7.2 Discussion/Approval of #23-02-R Resolution Creating a Committee on Persons with Disabilities

- Trustee Hickey motioned to open discussion/approval of Resolution #23-02-R Creating a Committee on Persons with Disabilities. Trustee Rotkis seconded the motion.
- Supervisor Crowner explained, per Illinois State statute, there are a number of categories the Board can create committees to explore potential offerings, including persons with disabilities. Noted that Trustee Hickey, who is interested in the topic, volunteered to lead a committee to explore potential programs that could be offered by Wheatland Township. Explained that in addition to Board appointments, resident participation would also be solicited to join the committee. Confirmed the majority of serving members were required to be persons with disabilities, and further detailed the committee was being appointed for exploratory purposes only and any recommendations re potential services/programming would be submitted to the Board, along with budget

requirements, for full review and approval prior to implementation. Administrator Green volunteered to serve as staff representative on the committee. Trustee Hickey reported on the high need within Wheatland Township communities to provide services for persons with physical/developmental disabilities to improve their self-sufficiency and life quality.

- The Board unanimously approved Resolution #23-02-R Creating a Committee on Persons with Disabilities 5-0 via roll call vote.

7.3 Discussion/Approval to set a Special Township Meeting of Electors

- Supervisor Crowner motioned to table discussion/approval to form a Special Township Meeting of Electors to the August Board meeting. Trustee Hickey seconded the motion, and the Board unanimously approved the request 5-0 to table discussions until the August 2023 meeting.

8. APPROVAL OF BILLS AND CLAIMS

8.1 06/08/23 – 07/13/23 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. Trustee Jones seconded the motion.
- Bills in the amount of \$589,881.00 were unanimously approved 5-0 in a roll call vote.

9. REPORTS

9.1 Administrator and Deputy Clerk Bill Green

- *Chamber of Commerce Memberships:* Confirmed Wheatland Township had become a member of the Plainfield/Shorewood Chamber of Commerce. The annual membership fee of \$100 has been submitted. A ribbon-cutting ceremony to celebrate the new membership will be held at the Wheatland offices on August 24. Also confirmed that inquiries to join the Naperville and Aurora Chambers of Commerce were in process and discussions to obtain reduced member fees were underway.
- *Community Health Services:* Updated that Wheatland Township would begin keeping Narcan at its reception desk as well as in every Township vehicle beginning July 17. The Will County Health Department will provide Narcan at no cost to Wheatland Township. Noted that the planned Dental Truck service day had been moved to September 14.
- *Will County Clerk sub-station:* Reported that he was exploring the opportunity for Wheatland Township to become a substation for the County Clerk's office which would allow Wheatland to begin offering marriage licenses services. Administrator/Deputy Clerk Green would train to administer the service and Wheatland would receive a portion of the fees for executing the licenses.
- *Recycling Reimbursement:* Updated that Wheatland Township would receive \$200 reimbursement for the fire extinguisher cabinet.
- *Mandatory Training:* Notified the Board that all staff and elected officials were required to complete the annual online harassment training course.
- *ARPA Funding:* Confirmed that Wheatland Township was registered with Sam.gov and its accounts were fully active. All previous issues had been resolved and several items had been submitted for funding by Anser Advisory Group, Wheatland Township's ARPA representative.

9.2. ASSESSOR (CHUCK KERN)

– Reported that Will County would be mailing notifications re new assessments to Wheatland Township property owners on or about August 9. As mentioned in previous meetings, the Illinois Department of Revenue confirmed most area property values will increase approx.9.5 percent, though actual assessments may be higher or lower depending on several factors. In response to a question from Supervisor Crouner, he also confirmed Wheatland Township increase was on the lower end of the 8 – 12 percent increases levied on surrounding areas.

- Updated the Assessor's office staff was anticipating a heavy workload during August as they respond to resident inquiries about the changes and provide information about the appeal process. Confirmed all staff members are equipped to serve the public and directly empowered to resolve issues as they arise.

-Raised the reoccurring issue of humidity inside Wheatland Township offices, noting he had received employee complaints re uncomfortable conditions. Supervisor Crouner responded by confirming plumbers and HVAC providers had been contacted to provide quotes on addressing the issue, including installation of new waterlines. Bids were due in the next week with a contractor expected to be hired and begin work later in the month.

9.3. HIGHWAY COMMISSIONER (TOM WIESER)

- Opened his comments by updating on the noise issue that was raised by Wheatland Township resident in a letter read into the minutes of the June Board meeting by Trustee Rotkis. He reported that the public meeting to address excessive noise issues near Wolf Crossing had raised the need for Wheatland Township to revise and strengthen three ordinances related to parking. Changes will include revising language restricting "no parking overnight" to specify the exact times parking will be prohibited such as "no parking from 2 a.m. to 5 a.m." He noted separate ordinances will be required for each business district, which will entail repealing the old ones and approving revised versions. Highway Commissioner Wieser along with Supervisor Crouner and Wheatland Township staff will initiate a process to review the current parking ordinances, identify/submit those needed to be repealed, recommend revisions for approval. After the Board votes on the new ordinances, they will be posted on the Wheatland Township Website. Confirming that the Wheatland Road Crew only has responsibility for maintaining the roads and would not be responsible for enforcing the ordinances, he reported that at the public meeting TOI had recommended establishing an intergovernmental agreement with the Will County Sheriff's Office, which is responsible for enforcement. However, the Sherriff disagreed with the need for an IGA. Supervisor Crouner requested Highway Commissioner Wieser submit a written outline of what Wheatland Road Crew will do to comply with the directives. In closing, Highway Commissioner Wieser reported police presence and patrolling was increasing in the area to deter noise offenders and that the business community was also taking significant steps to lower industrial noise as well.

9.4 TRUSTEES:

TRUSTEE (MEGHNA BANSAL)

- Reported that 20 senior residents attended the June senior luncheon, which was catered by McAllister's Deli at a cost of \$331, that was offset by \$5.00 contributions collected from each attendee. She noted staff members from Congresswomen Laura Ellman's office presented at the luncheon and participants also played bingo as entertainment. Confirmed the next senior lunch will be held on July 19, 2023.

TRUSTEE (Kelly Hickey)

- Informed that the Secretary of State's Office had confirmed they would send two people to facilitate two Real ID application sessions in Wheatland Township on two Saturdays in August and/or September. Specific dates will be finalized in coordination with the determined location. Trustee Hickey has reached out to the Naperville Library on 95th Street. Application services will be provided by the Secretary of State at no cost to Wheatland Township. Trustee Hickey stated she will continue to research the possible event and provide a formal recommendation to the Board at a future meeting.
- In follow up to discussions re the resolution to form a committee to address the needs of persons with disabilities, Trustee Hickey explained she would be researching the process other townships committees had employed in forming similar committees and would report best practices at a future Board meeting.

TRUSTEE (COLLEEN ROTKIS)

- n/a

TRUSTEE (Terry Jones)

- n/a

9.5. TOWNSHIP CLERK (ANITA LISKEY)

- Reported that three FOIAs were completed during the month, with no outstanding issues. Noted FOIAs activity had increased significantly in the first half of 2023, with more than 22 inquiries and responses completed in the first six months, nearly double the full-year volume of 2022.
- Updated that progress continued to be made in moving more Township files online to the newly launched shared drive and explained that clean-up and disposal of paper files would begin again after the summer.
- Noted she would be coordinating with Deputy Clerk Bill Green and Will County to update the Township's records disposal certificate.

9.6. TAX COLLECTOR/CEMETERY (DAVID SCRIVEN-YOUNG via Jim Hofman)

- Reported no burials had taken place during the month and confirmed one grave site had been sold in June and one cremation had taken place in early July.
- Thanked Supervisor Crowner and Administrator Green for their assistance in moving the Care Fund certificate of deposit to a higher-yielding account at Wheaton Bank
- Informed the cemetery Facebook page had been updated during the month to include more information and policy updates as well as photos to showcase the rich history of the cemetery to Wheatland Township residents.

9.7. SUPERVISOR (MICHAEL CROWNER)

- Reported that he had visited several other townships to learn about the services they provide, explore best practices, and identify additional opportunities for potential collaboration through IGAs to increase efficiencies for the benefit of Wheatland Township residents. As part of the outreach, he was also researching human resource practices of other townships, reviewing employee manuals, benefits, etc., to ensure Wheatland Township was on par with other government entities. Noted he was focused on ensuring Wheatland remained in compliance with the State of Illinois employee

statutes, specifically regarding new laws guaranteeing sick leave for part-time employees.

- Noted Administrator Green was working to access funds allocated to townships by the State of Illinois in its recently approved budget. While there is no information yet on the exact amount, Supervisor Crowner expressed his hope that monies could be available to support the road district initiatives including street repaving projects.

- Confirmed the Board's decision to move funds into higher-interest-bearing certificates of deposit was generating interest income for Wheatland Township.

- Informed that new plans to update the Wheatland Township website were underway, with a particular focus on improving navigation to make organization more intuitive and information easier to find. Noted he would be managing the updates personally to save consulting fees.

- Updated that initial Decennial Committee materials had been posted on the shared drive and confirmed Intergovernmental Agreements and other contracts were being added there as well for easy access and review by committee members. He also noted a dropbox would be added to provide access for outside committee members.

10. ADJOURNMENT:

- Trustee Hickey moved to adjourn the meeting and Trustee Jones seconded the motion. The meeting was adjourned on a voice vote at 8:19 p.m.

Next meeting Thursday, August 10, 2023

Approved as presented:

Anita Liskey

Prepared by Anita Liskey, Township Clerk