**Wheatland Township Board Meeting**

**Thursday, November 9, 2023**

**1. CALL TO ORDER**

The meeting was called to order by Supervisor Crowner at 7:35 p.m.

**2. PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE**

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

**4. PUBLIC COMMENT**

**None**

**5.** **APPROVAL OF MINUTES**

- Trustee Jones motioned to open discussion/approval of the minutes for the October 12, 2023, Regular Meeting Open Session. Trustee Hickey seconded.

- The minutes for the October 12, 2023, Regular Meeting Open Session were unanimously approved 5-0 per roll call vote.

**6. OLD BUSINESS**

**6.1 Discussion/Approval of Wheatland Township Employee Handbook**

- Supervisor Crowner motioned to postpone discussions/approval of the Wheatland Township employee handbook until the December meeting, when the final rules/information about the State of Illinois’ new PTO policy for part-time employees would be final. He noted Township Officials of Illinois is recommending amendments to the law exempting Townships and other municipalities from the new rules. TOI is in the process of finalizing. Postponing this discussion to next month will allow the Board to have access to full, up-to-date information.

-Trustee Hickey seconded the motion to postpone discussions/approval until December. The Board unanimously approved moving the topic to its December meeting 5-0 via roll call vote.

**7.**  **NEW BUSINESS**

**7.1 Discussion/Approval of 2024 Health Insurance Program**

**-** Trustee Hickey motioned to open discussion/approval of the 2024 Health Insurance Program and Trustee Jones seconded.

**-** Dimond Bros. Insurance representative Karri McRight attended the meeting, provided an overview of Wheatland Township’s existing Blue Cross Blue Shield healthcare plans (Choice Preferred and PPO), noting that the increase required to maintain those plans would be minimal (below double-digits), a positive in this rising-cost environment. She also presented additional plan options from Blue Cross Blue Shield of Illinois and United Healthcare for the Board consideration, noting that Aetna declined to bid as it does not offer insurance programs for townships.

- Supervisor Crowner pointed out that employee health insurance is one of the Wheatland Townships most significant expenses and noted the current practice of providing 100 percent (no deductible) coverage for employees and 80 percent for dependents was unique and generous when compared to other neighboring townships.

- Trustee Jones inquired about how much had been budgeted for increases in 2024 and Supervisor Crowner confirmed a minimal increase from current plans had been included in the budget.

- Supervisor Crowner also discussed that some employees had raised concerns about salary levels, requesting Wheatland Township increase salaries to be in line with other townships. He suggested the Board consider that they may have to look for savings on insurance to offset higher raises as Wheatland Township cannot exceed peers on both salaries and insurance.

-Tax Collector Scriven-Young commented that Wheatland Township historically had maintained a consistent approach to employee healthcare offerings, despite last year’s high renewal increase. He raised concerns that requiring more employee contribution/higher deductibles could be a shock. Trustee Hickey agreed the plan coverage should remain.

-Trustee Jones asked about the availability of Dependent Care and Healthcare Savings Accounts, requesting the Board explore those offerings in the future.

- Supervisor Crowner motioned to approve renewing the first two plans P5e1BCe and G507Opt which would allow Wheatland Township to continue offering the same level of coverage, without increasing employee contributions. Trustee Hickey seconded the motion and the Board unanimously approved to renew the Blue Cross Blue Shield Healthcare Insurance plans for 2024 5-0 via roll call vote.

**7.2 Discussion/Approval of 2024 Dental Plan**

**-** Trustee Jones motioned to open discussion/approval of the 2024 Dental Plan and Supervisor Crowner seconded the motion.

**-** After review and discussion of Dental Insurance plans from Principal, Ameritas, MetLife, and Mutual of Omaha the Board unanimously approved the MetLife program which provides the minimally higher level of coverage and a large provider network at a reduced rate from the current provider with a 2-year rate lock option.

**7.3 Discussion/Approval of 2024 Vision Insurance Program**

- Trustee Rotkis motioned to open discussion/approval of 2024 Vision Insurance Program and Trustee Bansal seconded.

- After review and discussion of proposals from five providers, Principal, Ameritas, EyeMed, MetLife and Mutual of Omaha, the Board unanimously approved the EyeMed Vision Insurance Plan, with a 48-month rate lock, 5-0 via roll call vote.

**7.4 Discussion/Approval of Life/AD&D Insurance Program**

- Trustee Jones motioned to open discussion/approval of the Life/AD&D Insurance Program and Supervisor Crowner seconded.

- Following presentations of proposals from Principal Financial Group, MetLife, Mutual of Omaha, the board unanimously approved the MetLife program, with a 24 month rate lock, for Life/AD&D insurance 5-0 in a roll call vote.

**7.5 Discussion/Approval of the 2024 Board Meeting Schedule**

- Trustee Bansal motioned to open discussion/approval of the 2024 Board Meeting Schedule and Trustee Hickey seconded.

- The Board unanimously approved the 2024 Board Meeting Schedule as presented 5-0 via roll call vote.

**7.6 Discussion/Approval of the 2024 Holiday Schedule**

- Trustee Hickey motioned to open discussion/approval of the 2024 Holiday Schedule and Trustee Jones seconded.

- Supervisor Crowner noted the addition of a holiday for Lincoln’s birthday to align the Wheatland Township holidays with the Will County schedule.

- The Board unanimously approved the 2024 Holiday Schedule as presented 5-0 via roll call vote.

**7.7 Discussion/Approval of the Tax Levy for Truth in Taxation Law for Town Fund**

- Trustee Jones motioned to open discussion/approval of the Tax Levy for Truth in Taxation Law for Town Fund and Trustee Hickey seconded.

- Supervisor Crowner informed that the township’s accountant, Mark Dahlberg, was recommending a 5.14% increase, due in large part to continued rising cost trends, including an above-5% increase in last year’s Consumer Price Index, and the way Will County calculates the allowable tax levy increases and noted that if the CPI number is less than 5% this year, Wheatland Township would receive a lower increase as well. Supervisor Crowner read the full recommendation from the accountant, and Trustee Rotkis requested a written copy. Supervisor Crowner reminded the Board that given the above 5 percent increase, notices/posting of the Town Fund Tax Levy would be required and another vote to finalize would be taken at the December meeting. He also reminded the Board to consider the number of households now served by Wheatland Township had increased significantly for several years, including last year. In response to inquiry re the numbers in the Assessor’s budget, Supervisor Crowner clarified the figures included in the Town Fund levy proposal were not fully approved budget figures, but rather, in some cases and specifically in the Assessor’s area, estimates for the purpose of illustrating how the levies would be distributed.

- The Board voted 4-1 to approve the Tax Levy for Truth in Taxation Law for the Town Fund for posting, with a final vote to take place in the December 2023 meeting.

**7.8 Discussion/Approval of the Tax Levy for Truth in Taxation Law for Road District**

- Trustee Jones motioned to open discussion/approval of the Tax Levy for Truth in Taxation Law for Road District and Supervisor Crowner seconded.

- As with the Town Fund Tax levy (above), Supervisor Crowner clarified, due to recommended increase that was also above 5%, the Board would be voting to post the Road District Levy, requiring another final vote to approve at the December meeting. He also reminded that in addition to what was presented in the Road District Levy documents, Wheatland Township had been allocated $325K from the State of Illinois budget in 2024 which is enabling a smaller increase request for the Road District tax levy.

- Road Commissioner Wieser updated that the road crew had been making significant headway implementing road improvements following a long 6-year period where significant issues had been deferred, resulting in a heightened need for repairs. He warned postponing necessary improvements any further would only increase costs ultimately.

- The Board unanimously voted 5-0 to post the final the Tax Levy for Truth in Taxation Law for the Road District, with a final vote to take place in the December 2023 meeting.

**8.** **APPROVAL OF BILLS AND CLAIMS**

**8.1 Town and Road District Fund Bills & Claims**

- Trustee Hickey motioned to open discussion/approval November Town and Road District Fund Bills and Claims, and Trustee Jones seconded the motion.

- Trustee Jones asked why there was still a Comcast bill when the Board had changed phone service providers during the prior month, to which Supervisor Crowner explained the transition was not yet complete as equipment had not yet been received. He also noted that Comcast would continue providing fax services.

- The Board unanimously approved bills and claims of $3,244,356.01 5-0 in a roll call vote.

**9. REPORTS**

**9.1 Sr. Administrator - Bill Green**

- Referring to his written report in the Board packet, highlighted an increase in requests for Notary Services during October and unveiled a new FOIA log/process, developed at the request of Clerk Liskey, to be piloted in December for implementation in 2024.

**9.2. ASSESSOR (Chuck Kern)**

- Reported the Assessor’s office had processed 450 exemptions for Wheatland Township property owners during this cycle. Since Aug 9, the Assessor’s team had managed about 360 “soft” informal repeals, with approximately 245 moving forward with hard appeals for hearings.

- Informed about two internship programs offered by Joliet Junior College and Joliet Township High School in which the schools would provide students to serve as interns, with salaries fully funded by the schools.

**9.3. HIGHWAY COMMISSIONER (Tom Wieser)**

– Updated that he is in the process of determining the 2024 road program and requested Board feedback on roads in need of repair. Also found out corner of 59 and 119tt, possible location for Woodman’s grocery store. Concern about traffic or other. Polo grounds under development – first houses later this month.

**9.4 TRUSTEES:**

**TRUSTEE (Meghna Bansal)**

- Reported on October 18 Senior Luncheon, noting 24 seniors had attended the luncheon which was provided by Vita Bella Pizza for a total cost of $523, of which attendees paid $110. Tim Ory, Naperville Historian, and a representative from the Will County Recorder of Deeds office were featured speakers.

- Confirmed the next luncheon would be held on November 15 and that a pharmacist from Osco will deliver a presentation on medication management.

**TRUSTEE (Kelly Hickey)**

-Reported the Plainfield Fire Chief reached out to discuss partnership opportunities on mental health programs.

-Updated she continues to work on creating a committee for residents with disabilities, which includes researching the structure and operations of similar committees at other townships.

**TRUSTEE (Colleen Rotkis)**

- No Report

**TRUSTEE (Terry Jones)**

- No Report

**9.5. TOWNSHIP CLERK (Anita Liskey)**

- No Report.

**9.6. TAX COLLECTOR/CEMETERY (David Scriven-Young)**

-Reported the cemetery hosted a clean-up day on October 28, and thanked Jim and Laura Hofman for their assistance.

**9.7. SUPERVISOR (Michael Crowner)**

– Updated on a Plainfield/Shorewood Area Chamber of Commerce event he and Administrator/Deputy Clerk Green had attended to meet residents and establish Wheatland Township as an active participant within the community.

-Noted that he is prioritizing the goal of recognizing businesses in community and finding ways to partner with them to serve residents.

-Informed he had joined the Government Financial Officers Association.

- Most proud of how we are starting to diversify funding sources, looking forward to learning more.

**10. Executive Session**

**10. 1 Assessor Vacancy Interviews**

- Given robust agenda with priority on addressing employee insurance programs, Supervisor Crowner informed the Board the interviews with candidates to fill the opening for a new assessor would be postponed and would be completed in a special Board meeting on Thursday, November 16, 2023, at 7 p.m.

**11. ADJOURNMENT:**

- Supervisor Crowner moved to adjourn the meeting and Trustee Jones seconded the motion. The meeting was adjourned on a voice vote at 9:25 p.m.

**Next meeting Thursday, December 14, 2023**

Approved as presented:

*Anita Liskey\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_*