

**Wheatland Township Board Meeting
Thursday, February 8, 2024**

1. CALL TO ORDER

The meeting was called to order by Supervisor Crowner at 7:31 p.m.

2. PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE

Supervisor Crowner led the pledge of allegiance.

3. ROLL CALL AND ESTABLISHMENT OF A QUORUM

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

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

4. PUBLIC COMMENT

None

*** Note: To accommodate guests in attendance, New Business Item 7.1 Approval of Resolution #24-02-R –Honoring Hannah Grispo was covered at the top of the Feb. 8, 2024, Wheatland Township Board meeting agenda. The minutes of this item are reflected in regular order in the 7. New Business section included below.*

5. APPROVAL OF MINUTES

5.1 Approval of January 11, 2024, Regular Meeting Open Session Minutes

- Trustee Jones motioned to open discussion/approval of the minutes for the January 11, 2024, Regular Meeting Open Session. Trustee K. Hickey seconded.

- The minutes for the January 11, 2024, Regular Meeting Open Session were unanimously approved 5-0 per roll-call vote.

5.2 Approve January 11, 2024, Executive Session Minutes

Noting corrections were required, Supervisor Crowner motioned to table approval of the January 11, 2024, Executive Session Minutes and the approval of updates to the previously approved December 14, 2023, Regular session minutes. The Board unanimously approved postponing approval of the January 11, 2024, Executive Session Minutes to its February meeting 5-0 via roll call vote.

5.3 Approval of Updates to Previously Approved December 14, 2023 – Regular Session Minutes

As noted above in section 5.2 and at the request of Supervisor Crowner, the Board unanimously approved postponing approval of the previously approved December 14, 2023, Regular Session Minutes to its February meeting 5-0 via roll call vote.

6. OLD BUSINESS

n/a

7. NEW BUSINESS

7.1 Resolution #24-02-R – Resolution Honoring Hannah Grispo

Trustee Jones motioned to open discussion/approval of Resolution #24-02-R Honoring Hannah Grispo. Trustee Kelly Hickey seconded. Trustee Rotkis read the resolution (as attached) in recognition and appreciation of Ms. Grispo's outstanding commitment to the cause of childhood cancer awareness participation in CureFest 2023 and in support of her achievement in making a positive impact on the lives of those affected by childhood cancer. The Board unanimously approved Resolution #24-02-R 5-0 via roll call vote. As noted, and at the request of Supervisor Crowner this item was covered at the beginning of the Board meeting.

7.2 Approval of Resolution #24-03-R – Resolution Congratulating Niels DeBrouckere

Trustee Rotkis motioned to open discussion/approval of Resolution #24-03-R- Congratulating Niels DeBrouckere. Expressing his pleasure to recognize the accomplishments of two young Wheatland Township residents during the February Board meeting, Supervisor Crowner read Resolution #24-03-R – Congratulating Niels DeBrouckere recognizing his appointment to Eagle Scout, the highest honor bestowed by the Boy Scouts of America (as attached) into the record. The Board unanimously approved Resolution #24-03-R - Congratulating Niels DeBrouckere 5-0 via roll call vote.

7.3 Approval of Resolution #24-04-R – Resolution Including Compensation Paid Under IRC Sec 125 Plan as IMRF Earnings

Trustee Rotkis motioned to open discussion/approval of Resolution #24-04-R – Including Compensation Paid Under IRC Sec 125 Plan as IMRF Earnings and Trustee K. Hickey seconded the motion. Reading from notes provided by Wheatland Township's accountant, Supervisor Crowner provided background following an audit of the IMRF Illinois Municipal Retirement Fund, the accountant advised the Wheatland Township Board to adopt and document this resolution to bring Wheatland Township records into compliance with Sec 125 allowing employees to use pre-tax dollars to pay for out-of-pocket dependent healthcare costs. Noting that though no documentation could be found, the benefit had been in practice for some time. Therefore, Resolution #24-04-R would be retroactive to January 1, 2018. The Board unanimously approved Resolution #24-04-R – Including Compensation Paid Under IRC Sec 125 Plan as IMRF Earnings 5-0 via roll call vote.

7.4 Approval of Ordinance #24-01-O Town Fund Budget

- Trustee Rotkis motioned to open discussion/approval of Resolution #24-01-O – Town Fund Budget and Trustee Jones seconded.

- Noting computer issues had delayed distribution of the draft budget proposals and other related materials, Supervisor Crowner explained the Town Fund Budget as well as the next two agenda items including Ordinance #24-02-O Road District Budget and 7.6 Updates to Wheatland Township Employee Handbook would be for discussion only to ensure adequate time was provided for Board member review.

- He explained a vote to approve and hang the Town Fund budget vote would take place in March, followed by final approval at the April Board meeting.

- He then provided an overview of the proposal highlights including: (1) a slight increase in income due to the receipt of more grants than had been anticipated as well as higher income generated from the rising rate environment that allowed for higher yields on funds held in bank accounts. (2) a requested operational increase of \$13k (3) \$5k to launch of a persons with disabilities committee (4) an additional \$15k for new mental health services due, in part, to an increase in requests to the emergency assistance for mental health support as well as the adoption of expanded mental healthcare initiatives in neighboring townships (5) \$12k to implement a

youth scholarship program to benefit Wheatland Township students; and (6) the likelihood of a marginal increase to the Emergency Assistance fund based on IGA partner DuPage Township update on a significant spike in resident requests for assistance as well as (7) an additional \$5k for the general assistance fund. Other than those items, he noted the majority of the proposed Town Fund budget items were flat or decreased from the previous year.

- Trustee Rotkis expressed concerns about adding funds without specific plans or details re who would manage/implement the potential new programs given small staff. Supervisor Crouner explained most of the new programs would be implemented via additional intragovernmental agreements in which Wheatland Township would pay a fee to other partner entities that would manage the work. He confirmed more details would be provided at the March meeting.

-Trustee J. Hickey asked about the process for submitting budget questions. Supervisor Crouner agreed to arrange a separate meeting to review the process and details of the proposed budget and encouraged him to ask questions during the Board meetings.

-Assessor Katzberg noted she would be making a few adjustments to health insurance and other areas as well as potentially adding a full-time commercial assessor position.

- Tax Collector Scriven-Young commented that the Cemetery Board would determine at its Feb 13 meeting if it would be possible to repair cemetery roads during the current fiscal year using funds currently in the budget. If the work could not be completed in the current year, he explained the cemetery would set up an accrual to complete the project in 2025. He will update the Board at the March meeting.

7.5 Approval of Ordinance #24-02-O Road District Budget

- At Supervisor Crouner's request, Road Commissioner Wieser summarized key changes to be included in the Road District Budget proposal: (1) Explaining that State of Illinois infrastructure improvement grants were likely to be paid next year, he noted the road crew planned to be able to use new grant funds to cover a larger number of road improvement projects than had completed in prior years. (2) He estimated the amount of storm water work would be flat to 2023, with no special projects planned.

- In anticipation of new grant funds, he informed that the bid request process had begun so a contractor could be selected in April, at which time estimates would be replaced with actual budget numbers.

7.6 Discussion of Updates to Wheatland Township Employee Handbook

- Assessor Katzberg reviewed policy changes made in the Assessor's Office in 2015 that increased office hours and reduced paid-lunch time, noting that she would present a recommendation to repeal/revise the policies at a future Board meeting.

- Trustee Rotkis requested a written summary of the hour changes for review prior to further discussion. Cemetery/Tax Collector Scriven-Young asked if the employee handbook was the same for the Township and Road Crew employees. Road Commissioner Wieser confirmed the policies were different for the two different employee groups and noted the possible need to separate the handbooks. Trustee Hickey requested an explanation of the overtime policy.

8. APPROVAL OF BILLS AND CLAIMS

8.1 Town and Road District Fund Bills & Claims

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

- Monthly bills and claims of \$176,626.60 were approved by the Board 5-0 in a roll-call vote.

9. REPORTS

9.1 Sr. Administrator/Deputy Clerk - Bill Green

- Referring to his submitted written report (attached), he highlighted the following:
- Informed Wheatland Township offices closed for a snow day on January 12.
- Updated the Comcast business review was completed during the month.
- Noted he will meet with ICRMT to ensure the Wheatland Township complies with safety regulations.
- Updated on a Senior Scams Informational program and the Plainfield Police Department plans to resurrect the TRIAD program. Noted plans to complete a needs assessment with the seniors attending the Senior Luncheon series to determine other potential areas of focus or service that Wheatland Township could consider such as a Car Care Clinic.
- Confirmed the Q1 2024 Wheatland Township newsletter had been distributed in February.

9.2. ASSESSOR (Mary Katzberg)

- Updated the Assessor's Office staff was catching up from any backlog resulting from the quadrennial assessment initiative
- Informed she was focusing on work with the County Assessor's Office.

9.3. HIGHWAY COMMISSIONER (Tom Wieser)

- Noted that as reported during the budget discussion, he was in the process of making final adjustments to the road program. Reiterated the potential new grant funds that the Road Crew may be receiving, noting that road improvement projects would be dependent on the actual grant amounts received. Updated that mild weather had reduced the need for salt or snow plowing and that the Road Crew had received compliments on the sweeping work that had been completed.

9.4 TRUSTEES:

TRUSTEE (Jim Hickey)

-n/a

TRUSTEE (Kelly Hickey)

- Informed the Senior Committee meetings will begin in April, and new committee members were needed to replace some who had moved. Noted she would be looking for speaker and programming suggestions.
- Confirmed social media solicitation had been posted for participants to join the soon-to-be-formed Persons with Disabilities Committee and residents had expressed interest in the idea but less on joining the committee-
- Requested permission to attend TOI Prof Development Day in Springfield on Feb 12 re the grant application process. Fees for the session are \$75.

TRUSTEE (Colleen Rotkis)

- Raised a potential rule violation that occurred during the Board process to appoint Trustee J. Hickey to an open Board position during its regular meeting/executive session in January 2024.
- Submitted to the Board and for Wheatland Township official record a copy of an email, sent to Will County State's Attorney Mary Tatroe on February 7, 2024, requesting an opinion on the potential breach in the appointment of Mr. Hickey to the Wheatland Township Board. The objection claims a violation by the Wheatland Township Board of the Illinois Open Meetings Act (S ILCS 120/1.02 as listed in Ch. 102, par. 41.02) which states, "Accordingly, for a 5-member public body, 3 members of the body constitute a quorum and the affirmative vote of 3 members is necessary to adopt any motion, resolution or ordinance, unless a greater number is otherwise

required.” In the email filing, Trustee Rotkis details, “The vote for Mr. James Hickey, with ballots cast on the evening of Jan 11, 2024, at our regular monthly meeting/executive session, consisted of 2 yeas (Supervisor Crowner and Trustee Jones), 1 nay (Trustee Rotkis) and 1 recusal (Trustee K. Hickey).” A full copy of the email is attached.

TRUSTEE (Terry Jones)

- n/a

9.5. TOWNSHIP CLERK (Anita Liskey)

- Updated that one FOIA was received during the month, confirming the response would be distributed by the end of the week.

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

- Noted activity had been low during the month of January and reminded the Cemetery Board would meet on February 13, 2024, to determine projects for the year.

9.7. SUPERVISOR (Michael Crowner)

– Reminded Board members to send any questions on the budget and offered to meet with anyone who wanted to discuss further.

-Noted he had scheduled time to begin working on a recommendation of new initiatives to pilot in the next fiscal year.

11. ADJOURNMENT:

- Trustee Jones moved to adjourn the meeting and Trustee K. Hickey seconded the motion. The meeting was adjourned on a voice vote at 8:53 p.m.

Next meeting Thursday, March 14, 2024

Approved as presented:

Anita Liskey
