

**Wheatland Township Board Meeting  
Thursday, March 14, 2024**

**1. CALL TO ORDER**

The meeting was called to order by Supervisor Crowner at 7:32 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 attended the meeting. Trustee C. Rotkis was absent.

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

**4. PUBLIC COMMENT**

Laura Hofman, wife of Wheatland Township Cemetery employee Jim Hofman and Wheatland Township resident, attended the meeting to read a letter (as attached) to update the Board at Jim's request and for inclusion into the meeting minutes. In summary, she informed the Board that due to a stroke suffered on Feb 17, Jim Hofman is currently in rehab and is unable to use his right leg or arm. Doctors are estimating the rehabilitation care will continue for several months or longer. Jim is adjusting to a new financial reality. He has been with Wheatland Township for more than four years and involved much longer. She noted that Jim's salary of \$20 per hour is the lowest in the Township. [Note: That fact, though read to the Board, is not confirmed. Employee salaries are confidential.] She thanked Supervisor Crowner for prompt replies during Jim's health crisis and his assistance with disability insurance and IMRF [Illinois Municipal Retirement Fund], and noted Jim was waiting for a response on his 2024 mileage reimbursement submission. She said that for the last few months, Jim had been treated poorly at Wheatland Township for reasons she wouldn't get into. She then stated that now is the time for Jim to get back on his feet, which would include disability income. She noted that the Board has sought to make Wheatland Township better known within the community and suggested the best way to treat employees with respect, empathy and timeliness would be important [to achieving that goal] as [employees] are the face of the township. In closing, she thanked Michael for carrying out these values.

**5. APPROVAL OF MINUTES**

**5.1 Approval of February 8, 2024, Regular Meeting Open Session Minutes**

- Trustee K. Hickey motioned to open discussion/approval of the minutes for the February 8, 2024, Regular Meeting Open Session. Trustee Jones seconded.
- The minutes for the Feb 8, 2024, Regular Meeting Open Session were approved 4-0 via roll-call vote.

**5.2 Approval of January 11, 2024 – Executive Session Minutes**

- Trustee K. Hickey motioned to open discussion/approval of the minutes for the January 11, 2024, Executive Session. Trustee Jones seconded.
- Supervisor Crowner passed out copies of the minutes for Board review.
- Minutes from the Executive Session of the Board held on January 11, 2024, meeting were approved 3-0 via roll call vote, with Trustee J. Hickey recused and Trustee Rotkis absent.

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

- Noting a mistake in printing the December 14, 2023, minutes, Supervisor Crowner motioned to table the vote to approve those minutes to the April Board meeting.
- The Board approved deferral of a vote to approve its December minutes 4-0 via roll call vote.

## **6. OLD BUSINESS**

### **6.1 Discussion of Updates to Wheatland Township Employee Handbook**

- Supervisor Crowner detailed Wheatland Township and the Wheatland Road District planned to separate the employee handbooks for the two divisions into two separate documents. Once structure is in place, both handbooks will be presented to the Board for approval.

## **7. NEW BUSINESS**

### **7.1 Special Meeting Request**

- At the request of Trustee Rotkis, Supervisor Crowner moved to table this topic to be addressed at another meeting. Trustee Jones seconded the motion to defer discussion/approval of a special meeting request.
- The Board approved deferral of the special meeting request 4-0 via roll call vote.

### **7.2 Approval of Ordinance #24-01-O – Transfer of Appropriation**

- Trustee Jones motioned to approve of Ordinance #24-01-O – Transfer of Appropriation, and Trustee K. Hickey seconded the motion.
- Supervisor Crowner explained the ordinance provided the ability to move budgeted funds between line items to cover instances where there were minor overages with monies available in other areas of the budget. Detailed he had taken that action for two line items that had come in slightly over budget including (1) charges for a new accounting software package that included an option to prepay the 2025 annual fee to receive an ultimate savings of \$700 per year. (2) funds required for additional training and education classes in financial management. (3) expenses for telecommunication equipment that was required to switch service providers that would ultimately result in long-term savings.
- Trustee Jones asked why the software package was changed. Supervisor Crowner explained the cost was incurred because one of the QuickBooks accounts had expired. By renewing the software and prepaying for 2025, Wheatland Township will receive a \$521 rebate, which will be reflected in the next report. and received an additional savings of \$800 (vs previous software cost).
- Trustee J. Hickey asked if policies allowed third parties to authorize purchases without Board approval. Supervisor Crowner responded that a previously approved Board ordinance permitted purchases needed to prevent service disruptions and ensure business continuity could be made in coordination with Wheatland Township staff without Board review.

### **7.3 Approval of Ordinance #24-02-O – Town Fund Budget**

- Trustee K. Hickey motioned to open discussion/approval of Ordinance #24-02-O – Town Fund Budget and Trustee T. Jones seconded the motion.
- Supervisor Crowner opened discussions by explaining that though the budget included a placeholder number, it could be approved as is with only potential downward adjustments still to be made as needed. He also reviewed highlights including: (1) a minor \$5k increase to the Town Fund from 2023 (2) minor changes such as accounting and auditing services annual increase; (3) building maintenance reduction; (4) telecoms to remain relatively flat even though actual spend increased to \$14k, but would be reduced to \$12K; (5) postage and printing was up because two newsletters are being printed each year vs one; (6) PACE pricing has continued to go down \$35K to \$25K; (7) computer software and maintenance going up a bit to have equipment to save files,

mental health services pilot is included at \$15k, though spend is anticipated to be closer to \$10k, leaving a little leeway as the program will be new.

- Noted largest increases were on assessor side and included (1) raises for current staff, (2) an increase in subcontractor fees, (3) software upgrades/renewals, and (4) new office equipment purchases for a new assessor and (5) upgraded equipment for other staff as well as (6) a new laptop and scanner.

- Citing community need, motioned to approve an amendment to increase the General Assistance fund from \$4k to \$8k, due to increasing emergency assistance requests at Wheatland Township as well as other nearby townships. Trustee Jones seconded the motion, and the Board approved the \$4k increase 4-0 via roll-call vote.

- Confirmed all updates would be included in the final budget and detailed the total request would come in about \$100k above 2023, which would ensure sufficient funds would be available if needed and in areas as outlined in previous conversation during the upcoming year.

#### **7.4 Approval of Ordinance #24-03-O – Road District Budget**

- Supervisor Crowner motioned to table approval of Ordinance #24-03-O Road District Budget to the April Board meeting. Trustee Hickey seconded the motion.

- The Board approved the request to defer approval of Ordinance #24-03-O 4-0 via roll-call vote.

#### **7.5 Approval of Annual Town Fund Meeting Agenda**

- Trustee K. Hickey motioned to open discussion/approval of the Annual Town Fund Meeting agenda. Trustee Jones seconded the motion.

- The Board approved the Annual Town Fund Meeting agenda 4-0 via roll-call vote.

### **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 March Town and Road District Fund Bills and Claims, and Trustee T. Jones seconded the motion.

- Monthly bills and claims of \$144,841.63 were approved by the Board 4-0 in a roll-call vote.

### **9. REPORTS**

#### **9.1 Sr. Administrator/Deputy Clerk - Bill Green**

- Reported he and Carolyn attended an Illinois Association of Township Administrators meeting
- Updated on his participation in a video conference with Wintrust Savings.

- Informed he had solicited quotes for the installation of bullet proof glass in the office lobby and would provide more information and a recommendation for purchase for Board approval at an upcoming meeting.

- Reminded the Wheatland Township Annual Food Distribution would take place on Wednesday, April 17 from 4 -5:30 p.m. with food provided by the Illinois Foodbank at no cost to Wheatland Township.

#### **9.2. ASSESSOR (Mary Katzberg)**

- Reported assessor staff was focused on completing appraisals/assessment of new land parcels.

- Noted efforts were underway to improve communications with the County Assessor's office.

- Updated a WCAA meeting had been held to determine the President and Secretary of the Will County Assessors Association and that she planned to update the new officers on issues between county and township organizations.

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

- Confirmed the open bidding process for road programs had been completed and the winning bid was \$100k below estimates. The contract was awarded for road work to include repairs to the main roadway from 119<sup>th</sup> to the Will County border at 111<sup>th</sup> and a swath of road repairs in the Tamarack subdivision. Work is expected to begin mid-April to be completed by the first of May.
- Updated a new Woodman's Food Market will be built on the northeast corner of 119<sup>th</sup>, and potential traffic implications are currently being studied. Several meetings are taking place with impacted townships and the Illinois Department of Transportation. It is expected changes will be made to the intersection to address increased traffic.

### **9.4 TRUSTEES:**

#### **TRUSTEE (Jim Hickey)**

- Reported he participated in a comprehensive budget review with Supervisor Crowner and was preparing a 5-year financials trend summary along with a Q/A for Board reference prior to final budget approval.

#### **TRUSTEE (Kelly Hickey)**

- Updated on attendance at three informational/education sessions during the month, including: (1) a grant writing workshop sponsored by the Townships of Illinois in Springfield (2) an Accessibility Taskforce Committee re website access for persons with disabilities, highlighting that Naperville Parks website featured accommodations to help users with special needs. (3) a "When Seconds Matter" workshop re how to respond/handle specific crisis situations.
- Confirmed the first 2024 Senior Committee meeting would be held on Wednesday, April 3 at 10 a.m., and noted ongoing efforts to enlist two additional members to serve on the four-person committee.

#### **TRUSTEE (Colleen Rotkis)**

- No report (absent)

#### **TRUSTEE (Terry Jones)**

- Informed on a proposal (HB5050) to combine township and county road districts into a single county-led entity.

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

- Updated four FOIAs had been received during the month, and confirmed responses had been provided for three, with one remaining to be completed in the next few days.
- Reminded Board members to complete their Statement of Economic Interests by the May 1 deadline.

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

- Reported one burial taking place during the month.
- Given Township employee Jim Hofman's extended absence, raised the need for more cemetery volunteers and requested an ad soliciting additional assistance be placed in the next Wheatland Township newsletter.

**9.7. SUPERVISOR (Michael Crowner)**

- Reminded the Board that the 2024 Annual Meeting was scheduled for Tuesday, April 9 at 7 p.m. and would be immediately followed by the regular April Board meeting.
- Requested budget questions be forwarded to him and offered to hold individual meetings with anyone wanting further discussion.
- Updated on plans to present recommendations for potential new initiatives 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 8:25 p.m.

**Next meeting Tuesday, April 9, 2024**

Approved as presented:

*Anita Liskey*

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