

Whitewater Township Board
Minutes of Special Meeting and Budget Public Hearing held March 17, 2016

Call to Order

Supervisor Popp called the meeting to order at 7:12 p.m. at the Whitewater Township Hall, 5777 Vinton Road, Williamsburg, Michigan. Popp noted that computer issues delayed the start of the meeting.

Roll Call of Board Members

Board members present: Benak, Goss, Hubbell, Lawson, Popp

Board members absent: None

Others present: Vaughn Harshfield

Set/Adjust Meeting Agenda

Popp would like to revisit the costs for the fire/ambulance station renovation.

Added as Unfinished Business #2.

Popp also would like to add Hi Pray Park as New Business #10.

Declaration of Conflict of Interest

None

Public Comment

Vaughn Harshfield, 4404 N. Broomhead Road, stated he will come in to see the clerk in a couple weeks to go over some questions he has and not take up the board's time. He stated he wants to make sure the board realizes that he thinks the community really does care, and the turnout tonight is in no way indicative of how the community feels about the work you do. The things you do here are very important, it affects our township, and we do not want to have any long-term problems that Traverse City is facing, and that comes down to the board doing their due diligence. He apologized for the entire community for the turnout tonight. He thinks it is sad.

Public Hearings

2016/2017 Fire Special Assessment District Budget

Popp opened the public hearing at 7:17 p.m. and reminded everyone who wishes to comment to sign in.

Popp stated the following:

- The notice of the public hearing was published in the Traverse City Record-Eagle on 03/09/2016 and in the Elk Rapids News on 03/10/2016.
- The property tax millage rate proposed to be levied to support the proposed fire special assessment district budget is 1 mill, unchanged from previous years.
- Revenues are projected to be \$199,902. Taxable value in the township is just over \$195,000,000.

- Total expenditures are projected to be \$305,546. This is a red budget due to some of the planned capital expenditures. Those are renovations to the fire station and setting some money aside for Insurance Service Organization (ISO) water supply recommendations.
- No written comments have been received on this particular budget.
- Do we have any public comments on the budget?

Harshfield asked if Popp stated we are in the red.

Popp stated yes, the board has chosen to spend some of the money it has saved over the past three years on capital improvements.

Harshfield questioned why it would not balance if the money is available.

Popp explained that the capital expenditure funds are transferred out of the Fire Fund into the Fire Capital Improvement Fund, making the Fire Fund show a deficit. Even after the capital expenditures, the Fire Fund will have \$182,000 as a fund balance in the Fire Fund.

Goss noted that the board is budgeting new revenue and new expenditures, but the fund has a “fund balance,” which the board is dipping into to take care of these expenses. This creates a negative number. However, the fund itself will not have a negative number.

Popp noted he will rephrase his terminology; we are going to spend more this year than what our revenue will cover.

Goss noted it is technically called an operating deficit, which means we are dipping into the savings account, but the savings account cannot go negative.

Popp inquired if there were any other comments on the Fire Special Assessment District budget.

There were no other comments.

Popp closed the public hearing on the Fire Special Assessment District budget at 7:27 p.m.

2016/2017 Ambulance Millage Budget

Popp opened the public hearing at 7:28 p.m. and reminded everyone who wishes to comment to sign in.

Popp stated the following:

- The notice of the public hearing was published in the Traverse City Record-Eagle on 03/09/2016 and in the Elk Rapids News on 03/10/2016.
- The property tax millage rate proposed to be levied to support the proposed ambulance millage budget is 1.5 mills, reduced by MCL 211.34d to 1.4997 mills, which is the Headlee rollback.
- Total revenues generated, including some transfers in from the General Fund, are \$353,792. Total expenditures are estimated at \$368,800.

- Capital expenditures proposed for the coming year are renovations at the 8380 Old M-72 building.
- No written comments have been received.
- Is there anyone in the public tonight that would like to comment?

There were no comments.

Popp closed the public hearing at 7:31 p.m.

2016/2017 General Fund Budget and all other Township Budgets

Popp opened the public hearing at 7:32 p.m. and reminded everyone who wishes to comment to sign in.

Popp stated the following:

- The notice of the public hearing was published in the Traverse City Record-Eagle on 03/09/2016 and in the Elk Rapids News on 03/10/2016.
- The property tax millage rate proposed to be levied to support the General Fund budget and all other township budgets is 1 mill, reduced by MCL 211.34d to 0.6019 mills. Popp noted this is a slight reduction; 0.6021 was levied the past three years. The reduction is due to Headlee.
- In the General Fund, total revenue is \$578,912.

Benak inquired what the (current year) revenue figures are actually through.

Goss noted they are up to date through December 31. They have been entered through January 31 but not in time for the printing of this document. Current year expenditures are up to date through March 16.

Popp stated total expenditures are projected to be \$667,692. Transfers to Other Funds have been allocated as follows: \$15,000 to the Road (brining) Fund, \$100,000 to the Road Repair/Replacement Fund, \$25,000 to the Recreation Fund, and \$58,000 to the Ambulance Fund. Popp noted the board has been able to put a fair amount of money aside.

Popp further stated:

- No written comments have been received.
- Are there any comments from the public?

Harshfield stated the fund must balance at the end of the day, but Popp stated expenditures exceeded income.

Popp acknowledged that expenditures do exceed revenue by almost \$200,000.

Harshfield inquired where that money will come from.

Popp replied from money the board has saved in previous years, noting there will still be a General Fund balance of more than \$399,000.

Popp stated this public hearing is closed at 7:41 p.m.

Popp inquired if the board has any comments on the budget.

Goss informed the board that we will not be able to create the previously discussed separate cemetery fund due to the requirement to follow the Michigan Uniform Chart of Accounts. This has been verified with Jonathan at Tobin & Company. In order to create a separate cemetery fund, it would have to have its own tax levy. If its funding is through the General Fund, cemetery expenses are tracked through Department 276. Jonathan said the board could commit funds for cemetery improvement, but it would have to be done in the General Fund.

Benak inquired about the possibility of using the Public Improvement Fund.

Goss stated she looked at that as well, but the Public Improvement Fund is also only to be used if it has its own tax levy. Goss noted that she can provide everyone with the Chart of Accounts information, and noted that the auditors do check whether you have complied with the Michigan Uniform Chart of Accounts.

Brief discussion followed concerning the creation of the Road Repair/Replacement Fund and other funds.

Popp noted we will now return to the regular agenda at 7:45 p.m.

Unfinished Business

Cleanup Day

Popp received information from Area Waste. They have the June 11 date open.

Discussion followed concerning the number of trucks needed and the difference in rates.

Benak noted when the county stopped paying for recycle bins, American Waste decided to leave their bins in place for no charge. Also, the owners of American Waste live in the township and pay a lot of taxes in the township. Benak stated she prefers to patronize people who live in the township, if we can.

Motion by Benak, seconded by Lawson, that we stay with American Waste for this year's Cleanup Day. There was no further discussion. **Roll call vote: Benak, yes; Goss, yes; Hubbell, yes; Lawson, yes; Popp, yes. Motion carried.**

It was noted that Cleanup Day will take place on June 11th.

Fire/Ambulance Station Renovation Costs (added)

Popp noted we do not have an estimate on building costs. Dan Rudy did not think he would be able to provide us with a price by tonight. Popp stated we need to protect ourselves here if we really want to keep our foot on this. The land situation is also up in the air. Popp stated he has made application to MDOT to see if land is for sale behind the station. There is an irregular-

shaped piece of land that is about one-half acre behind the fire station. MDOT was told there is a deadline of 04/01/2016. Popp noted he has spoken to Ron Adams three times; he is the person who represents MDOT at the rail office. Adams indicated he would get us a decision back “promptly.”

Looking to the General Fund, Popp discussed the amounts projected to be transferred out. Regarding the \$100,000 set aside for Road Repair/Replacement Fund (RR/RF), Popp inquired if there is a way that we can keep the \$100,000 but share it between the RR/RF and if it is needed for renovations at 8380 Old M-72.

Discussion followed concerning whether to change the Transfers to Other Funds allocation in the General Fund, i.e., the Road Repair/Replacement Fund allocation, to show that some of those funds may be used for 8380 Old M-72 renovation costs.

Consensus was reached to leave the allocation of Transfers to Other Funds as is.

As to any changes to Fire Fund or Fire Capital Improvement Fund, the same conclusion was reached.

Consensus was reached that there will be no changes made to the budget tonight, but if those changes need to be made, the budget will be amended.

New Business

Approval of Budgeted Transfers – Fiscal Year 2015/2016

Goss noted that she provided a memo regarding budgeted transfers.

Motion by Hubbell, seconded by Lawson, to transfer \$37,000 from the General Fund to the Ambulance Fund. There was no further discussion. **Roll call vote: Goss, yes; Hubbell, yes; Lawson, yes; Popp, yes; Benak, yes. Motion carried.**

Motion by Benak, seconded by Popp, to transfer \$10,000 from the General Fund to the Road Fund. There was no further discussion. **Roll call vote: Hubbell, yes; Lawson, yes; Popp, yes; Benak, yes; Goss, yes. Motion carried.**

Motion by Goss, seconded by Lawson, to transfer \$100,000 from the General Fund to the Road Repair/Replacement Fund. There was no further discussion. **Roll call vote: Lawson, yes; Popp, yes; Benak, yes; Goss, yes; Hubbell, yes. Motion carried.**

Motion by Hubbell, seconded by Lawson, to transfer \$6,700 from the Fire Fund to the Fire Capital Improvement Fund. There was no further discussion. **Popp, yes; Benak, yes; Goss, yes; Hubbell, yes; Lawson, yes. Motion carried.**

Resolution #16-04 – Regular Board Meeting Dates for 2016/2017 Fiscal Year

Goss noted that the November regular meeting date falls on November 15, the opening day of deer season. Only one meeting is held in November.

Consensus was reached that the November meeting date should be changed to November 10th.

Motion by Hubbell, seconded by Benak, to adopt Resolution #16-04, as amended. There was no further discussion. **Roll call vote: Benak, yes; Goss, yes; Hubbell, yes; Lawson, yes; Popp, yes. Motion carried.**

A true and complete copy of said resolution is attached to the minutes.

Resolution #16-05 – Salary for Supervisor

Popp stated that this resolution is to set the supervisor's salary. In the interests of transparency, the board has elected to give itself a 3% cost of living raise.

Hubbell commented that the reason he feels comfortable doing this, and he thinks the rest of the board will back him up on what he is going to say, is that we have not done that in four years. He stated it is not much, but it is justifiable, in his mind.

Motion by Lawson, seconded by Goss, to adopt Resolution #16-05. There was no further discussion. **Roll call vote: Goss, yes; Hubbell, yes; Lawson, yes; Popp, yes; Benak, yes. Motion carried.**

A true and complete copy of said resolution is attached to the minutes.

Resolution #16-06 – Salary for Clerk

Popp stated this resolution sets the clerk's salary. For public transparency sake, there is a 3% increase. **Motion by Hubbell, seconded by Lawson, to adopt Resolution #16-06.** There was no further discussion. **Roll call vote: Hubbell, yes; Lawson, yes; Popp, yes; Benak, yes; Goss, yes. Motion carried.**

A true and complete copy of said resolution is attached to the minutes.

Resolution #16-07 – Salary for Treasurer

Popp stated this resolution sets the annual salary for the treasurer. For the sake of transparency, there has also been a 3% increase in this salary. **Motion by Lawson, seconded by Hubbell, to adopt Resolution #16-07.** There was no further discussion. **Roll call vote: Lawson, yes; Popp, yes; Benak, yes; Goss, yes; Hubbell, yes. Motion carried.**

A true and complete copy of said resolution is attached to the minutes.

Resolution #16-08 – Salary for Trustee

Popp noted this resolution sets the per meeting compensation for the trustees. In the spirit of transparency, the compensation was raised \$10 per meeting. **Motion by Popp, seconded by Benak, to adopt Resolution #16-08.** There was no further discussion. **Roll call vote: Popp, yes; Benak, yes; Goss, yes; Hubbell, yes; Lawson, yes. Motion carried.**

A true and complete copy of said resolution is attached to the minutes.

Resolution #16-09 – General Appropriations Act

Popp stated this is “a resolution to establish a general appropriation act for Whitewater Township, to define the powers and duties of Whitewater Township officers in relationship to administration of the budget, and to provide remedies for refusal or neglect to comply with the requirements of this resolution.” **Motion by Hubbell, seconded by Lawson, to adopt Resolution #16-09.** There was no further discussion. **Roll call vote: Benak, yes; Goss, yes; Hubbell, yes; Lawson, yes; Popp, yes. Motion carried.**

A true and complete copy of said resolution is attached to the minutes.

Approval of Salary/Wage Schedule 2016/2017

Goss reviewed the 2016/2017 document with the board and noted that the 2015/2016 wage for Planning Commission Subcommittee was “none” and inquired of the board if they want to address it or leave it as is.

Discussion followed.

Consensus was reached that Planning Commission Subcommittee members will get \$50 per meeting, including the chairperson. The Salary/Wage Schedule will be so amended.

The remaining schedule was reviewed and changes noted.

Motion by Hubbell, seconded by Goss, to approve the Salary/Wage Schedule 2016/2017, as amended. There was no further discussion. **Roll call vote: Goss, yes; Hubbell, yes; Lawson, yes; Popp, yes; Benak, yes. Motion carried.**

Approval of Graded Wage Scale 2016/2017

Popp stated he would make a recommendation that we drop the verbiage off the bottom of the document. This is a discussion document for a tabled agenda item that will be brought back soon. In the interests of public transparency, this document also represents a more than 3% wage increase for park personnel. With Burger King and McDonald’s offering \$9.50 to \$10 per hour to start, the board felt the \$9 per hour starting wage would not attract the labor pool that is needed.

Goss noted the Park Ranger II line was also eliminated.

Clerical Worker wages were briefly discussed.

Consensus was reached that the Clerical Worker line will show the same wages as Park Ranger, and that the General Labor line will be the same wage as the line above it (Clerical Worker), although it is not specifically shown.

Motion by Lawson, seconded by Goss, to approve the Graded Wage Scale 2016/2017, as amended. There was no further discussion. **Roll call vote: Hubbell, yes; Lawson, yes; Popp, yes; Benak, yes; Goss, yes. Motion carried.**

Hi Pray Park (added)

Popp drew the board's attention to a map showing a piece of property to the west of Hi Pray Park. Popp stated he was approached Monday and told this piece of property is coming up for sale. It is vacant land. The reason this is brought to the board is that there is a lot of request for soccer field space. The square part of the parcel is \$27,000. The entire parcel is \$38,000.

Discussion followed.

Consensus was reached that the board is not interested in purchasing this parcel, not because of price but because of other priorities. A donation would be entertained, as long as there was not a stipulation that it be park land.

Public Comment

Vaughn Harshfield, 4404 N. Broomhead Road, asked if we owe some of our older employees back wages and were those ever paid.

Goss stated they were paid.

Announcements

Popp stated he has been approached by community members to go on the Christal Frost radio program to speak about the positive attributes of a shooting range in Union Township. It was presented as opposition to the Whitewater Township shooting range at its proposed location.

Hubbell stated he knows maybe Whitewater is not the most ideal spot, the location they picked, but he will go on record as saying we do need something somewhere, because that is a great sport for families and young people. We have lost the Sportsman's Club. The only real place you can go now is the Cedar Run Gun Club. He stated he thinks we need to do it somewhere.

Lawson stated there needs to be a place.

Benak stated she lives close out that way and is not objecting to it except for the issue of trash being brought in and left at the current location in Hoosier Valley.

Popp stated we should probably put this on an agenda to have some discussion.

It was suggested that the public could be invited to send in letters of support or opposition.

Popp noted he has been busy receiving comments. Surprisingly, some say that the proposed facility does not go far enough. One person highlighted that there is no tactical pistol opportunity; there is only a 25-yard range and tactical pistol is 10 or less, so there is no opportunity for CPL at this facility. There is some question on a long-range site as well.

Hubbell added that he does not like the idea of not having supervision or hours of shooting.

Brief discussion followed.

Adjournment

Motion by Lawson, seconded by Hubbell, to adjourn. Meeting adjourned at 8:56 p.m.

Next meeting is March 29, 2016.

Respectfully submitted,

Cheryl A. Goss
Whitewater Township Clerk