

**Whitewater Township Board
Minutes of Special Meeting held February 9, 2022**

Call to Order

In the absence of Supervisor Popp, Clerk Goss called the meeting to order at 9:12 a.m. at the Whitewater Township Hall, 5777 Vinton Road, Williamsburg, Michigan.

Vollmuth nominated Goss to moderate the meeting.

Goss accepted the nomination.

Roll Call of Board Members

Board Members present in person: Treasurer Benak, Goss, Trustee Vollmuth

Board Members absent: Popp

Zoom Facilitator: Lois MacLean

Others present in person: Fire Chief Brandon Flynn and 1 other

Others present via Zoom: 1

Set/Adjust Meeting Agenda

There were no adjustments.

Declaration of Conflict of Interest

None

Public Comment (16:48)

Public comment began at 9:13 a.m.

Rod Rebant asked if the part of the budget(s) to be discussed could be listed for the budget meeting dates.

Goss responded to the question.

Public comment ended at 9:15 a.m.

Agenda Items as Listed in Special Meeting Notice (00:00)**BUDGET WORK SESSION - FIRE/FIRE CAPITAL IMPROVEMENT FUNDS**

Goss noted that Chief Flynn provided a proposed budget for the new fiscal year, as well as a memo concerning a special assessment district increase request, a grant tracker page, and a fire capital replacement page.

Chief Flynn had the following preliminary comments on the Fire Fund budget:

- It is almost identical to last year's, including the request for a special assessment increase of 0.5 mills for operating budget and to fund a fire cap fund to support capital item replacement items.
- The main issues are the new station, staffing issues, and replacement of the fire engine. Replacement of the fire engine is always at the top of the list as it is 20 years old and

there are issues with it. It looks like it might need \$50-60,000 worth of work on just the pump. They just had \$10,000 worth of work done on the motor last year. Now they are having issues with the pump engaging.

- Two firefighters will most likely be leaving soon. They are getting down to a scary staffing level. Everything has been falling on the chief's shoulders. If he does not hear anybody check in, the chief checks in and makes sure somebody is responding and takes care of the situation, and sometimes they have to call for help with their mutual aid partners.

Lengthy discussion followed.

\$8,000 will be added to the 705 training wage line item to cover the cost of paying two new firefighters to attend Firefighter I and II classes.

\$21,000 will be added to a new line item in the Fire Fund, 709 On-Call Wages, to cover shift work.

Per the Chief's recommendation, the hourly rate for training wages will increase to \$17, and the hourly rate for responses will increase to \$20.

The Chief and Assistant Chief will receive 3% raises. The chief's salary will go to \$61,903. The assistant chief's salary will go to \$3,825.

The Social Security line item will increase to \$8,400. The Medicare line item will increase to \$1,950.

The increased wages, Social Security, and Medicare costs total \$33,265.

Other line items were discussed.

Chief Flynn would like the cost of the Fire Programs annual subscription for NFIRS reporting to come out of 815 Contractual Services.

Discussion turned to the fire engine and its issues.

Vollmuth proposed a tax on the park to pay for public safety, similar to hotel taxes and covid charges.

Benak questioned where the authority would come from to do that.

Discussion followed.

On the topic of putting away money for fire engine replacement, Benak suggested reducing the \$100,000 to road replacement fund by \$50,000 in order to put it in the fire capital improvement fund.

Discussion followed.

Benak proposed a temporary increase in the Fire Special Assessment District to pay for the fire engine replacement.

Discussion followed.

Vollmuth volunteered to put something together to alert the public to the possibility that the Fire Special Assessment District levy could go as high as 1.5 mills when it is voted on at the budget public hearing on 3/21.

Revenue was briefly discussed.

There will be a \$35,000 transfer from the General Fund to the Fire Fund for additional wages and a \$50,000 transfer from the General Fund to the Fire Capital Improvement Fund for fire engine replacement.

Chief Flynn expressed appreciation for the board's support through the years.

Chief Flynn was praised for his work with the fire department.

Board Comments/Discussion (2:19:17)

Goss outlined the procedure that would have to be followed in the event there is not a quorum of the board on 3/21 for the budget public hearing.

The issue was briefly discussed.

Vollmuth asked about Goss's park budget.

Public Comment (2:24:08)

Public comment began at 11:21 a.m.

Don Glenn, 9792 Bluff Trail, expressed appreciation for everything the chief does for the township and commented on the issue of fire engine replacement.

Public comment ended at 11:23 p.m.

Adjournment (2:26:33)

There being no further business to bring before the board, the meeting was adjourned at 11:23 a.m.

Cheryl A. Goss
Whitewater Township Clerk