

Minutes of the Bloomington Township Board

The meeting was called to order at 5:30 p.m. on August 20, 2015 at 2111 West Vernal Pike.

Board members present were Bill Sturbaum, Kim Alexander, and Barbara McKinney. Also present were Trustee Lillian Henegar, Fire Chief Faron Livingston, and Deputy Trustee Lisa Myers.

AGENDA

Bill moved to accept the agenda as presented. Kim seconded, motion passed unanimously.

APPROVAL OF PREVIOUS MINUTES

Bill moved to accept the minutes of the July 9, 2015, board meeting as presented. Kim seconded, motion passed unanimously.

OLD BUSINESS - None

NEW BUSINESS

2016 Budget Preparation: Lillian reviewed the dates for the County Council's non-binding review, and the Township's public hearing and budget adoption meetings.

Lillian announced that Indiana has calculated the assessed value growth quotient at 2.6% for 2016, but we rounded up to 3% in our budget calculations. The increase allows us to estimate a higher tax rate which protects us against unexpected changes to the assessed values. Lillian detailed the budget figures on the 4B spreadsheet which assists us with calculating our proposed levies and tax rates. Lillian expressed her concern that the Direct Assistance portion of the Township Assistance budget may be inadequate due to the fact that rental rates are expected to nationally increase by 5% during the next year. Lillian explained the Township Direct Assistance comparison spreadsheet and asked for questions.

Lillian discussed the proposed salary changes which include a 3.62% increase for shift commanders and increases ranging from 1.34% - 1.60% for all other full time firefighters. Township staff salaries are being increased to bring them in line with other large Monroe County Townships. The decision has been made to increase the employee share of their health insurance cost. Per pay period, individual coverage will increase by \$4, employee plus spouse will increase by \$17, and employee plus family will increase by \$23. Each classification will now pay 5% of the cost of their health insurance. Previously, employees with single coverage were paying the highest percentage of the cost of their insurance. The Board asked if the Township deducts insurance premiums on a pre-tax basis and it was confirmed that premiums are taken pre-tax. The Board asked if employees will be able to adjust to the increase in premiums. Faron states he has discussed the possibility of increasing premiums with staff and there hasn't been a negative reaction. Lillian is planning to hold staff meetings in October to discuss the changes. It has also been decided that the salary stipend will be discontinued in 2016.

The contract amount with Bloomington Township Volunteer Fire Department (BTVFD) will remain the same in 2016.

Lillian highlighted the spreadsheet which compares the annual tax rates. The bottom of the page compares the 2015 rate with the proposed 2016 rate to show the projected tax increase. The assessed value used to calculate the tax rate was the 2015 average home price. The example cited shows an increase of almost \$100. The Board asked how the Township would explain an increase of \$100 to a taxpayer if asked. Lisa reminded everyone that part of the increase is due to the fire debt levy which will be new in 2016. The Board asked for the price of the new tanker and Faron stated it would be around \$320,000. However, the levy is based on the loan amount of \$350,000. Lisa pointed out the rate being used to calculate the example is the published rate and the Department of Local Government Finance (DLGF) will almost certainly reduce the rate when certifying the budget.

The Board asked about the amount being budgeted for community services/charges in the Rainy Day Fund. Lisa explained that we rarely spend any Rainy Day funds but we always appropriate an amount to have funding available in case of an emergency. The discussion then moved to the legal services amount in the Rainy Day Fund. Lisa stated the appropriation is also a precautionary area and explained that each fund has a line for legal services.

The Board asked about the increase to the temporary hourly worker line in the Township Assistance Fund. The budget is increasing from \$9,500 to \$15,600. Lisa explained that we have created a 20 hour front desk position with limited benefits that will be paid from that line. We inflated the amount in case we need to increase the hours for that position.

The Board questioned the increase to the utilities line in Direct Assistance. Lillian explained we are increasing that line in anticipation of being under budgeted for 2015. As of June 30, 2015, the Township had utilized 63% of the annual budget for utilities assistance.

PUBLIC COMMENT

There was no public comment.

REPORTS

Trustee: Lillian directed attention to the monthly statistical reports included in the Meeting materials.

Lillian reported we closed on the loan for the fire tanker truck on July 28.

Lillian is in the process of searching for an intern to assist with various projects. The listing is currently circulating among the IU school of public health and the school of public and environmental affairs (SPEA). It has also been distributed through Ivy Tech.

We currently have a Township Assistance case that is being appealed. The County Commissioners heard the case in May and ruled in our favor. The appeal has moved to the next

level and is now progressing to the Monroe County Circuit Courts Judge Francis Hill will hear the case in October.

Fire Chief: Engine 51 has been taken in for service to change the oil in the rear gear case.

Brad Wellman, who was hired in October of last year, has completed all of the necessary certifications. His probationary salary will be increased to the regular firefighter salary.

Lieutenant Clay Edwards let his instructor certification lapse. To remedy the situation, he will be attending a six (6) day class in Valparaiso, Indiana.

Station 5 sustained a lightning strike on July 17, 2015. The radio system took a direct hit and several parts need replaced. Due to the fact that some replacement parts are not compatible with our existing system, the whole system must be upgraded. The total cost will be in the range of \$30,000, and the insurance company has covered \$11,002 of the total. This equipment was nearing the end of the expected life span and according to the master plan was scheduled to be replaced in the next 1 – 2 years.

Plans to relocate Station 15 are still being considered. The Department would like to locate to the Sample Road area but the State has decided it is too early to talk about land availability.

The meeting was adjourned at 6:46 p.m. The next meeting is scheduled for Thursday, September 10.

Kim Alexander, Secretary