

Minutes Budget and Appropriation Ordinance Public Hearing

STATE OF ILLINOIS

LAKE COUNTY

TOWN OF NEWPORT

THE BOARD OF TOWN TRUSTEES met at the office of the Town Clerk at the Village Hall on May 20, 2015.

Members Present:

Beth Hartford, Trustee

Ronald Miller, Trustee

Diane Crittenden, Trustee

Corey Kirschhoffer, Trustee

Rodger Edmonds, Highway Commissioner

Jerome Berens, Assessor

Debbie Spurgeon, Clerk

Randy Whitmore, Supervisor

Call to Order: Supervisor Whitmore called the meeting of the General Township Budget & Appropriation Ordinance Public Hearing to order at 6:35 p.m.

Pledge of Allegiance: Supervisor Whitmore led the Pledge of Allegiance.

Roll Call: In attendance were Beth Hartford, Ronald Miller, Rodger Edmonds, Jerome Berens, Diane Crittenden, Corey Kirschhoffer, Debbie Spurgeon and Randy Whitmore. Also present, Ancel, Glink, Diamond, Bush, DiCianni & Krafthefer, PC attorney, Tiffany Nelson-Jaworski.

Public Hearing for the Budget & Appropriation Ordinance – General Township Budget, for Fiscal Year March 1, 2015 - February 29, 2016

Review / Adoption of Tentative General Township Budget:

Supervisor Whitmore inquires if there is any discussion on the General Town Budget. From the audience, Toni Edmonds states a modification has been made to the line item 101534 for utilities

from \$50.00 to \$1,250.00 from the posted budget. (Mrs. Edmonds also comments on a similar line item for the road district budget.)

Whitmore indicates the total amount of the levy this year is \$155,495.34.

Trustee Hartford comments Whitmore has previously stated he will be lowering legal expenditures, yet his budget proposal shows an increase (in the amount of \$5,000) to what was spent last year. Whitmore responds he isn't going to rely on the attorneys as much. Hartford wonders then why the budget is indicating an increase for legal expenses. Whitmore says there will be a downward spiral in legal fees, once tonight's budget hearings have been concluded. Trustee Miller comments the township is already on the hook for a \$500 per month retainer fee, and at \$6,000 annually suggests Whitmore should be trimming legal spending, rather than increasing it. Supervisor Whitmore says the cow cannot be trimmed too much. Miller retorts the cow is pretty fat. Whitmore says he is working on it.

Supervisor Whitmore asks if there is any public wishing to comment. Mrs. Mildred Corder inquires if the current legal expenses for the General Town Fund will be going up, since the supervisor has budgeted additional money for legal expenses for FY 2015-16. Whitmore says no, adding he is budgeting additional money just in case, and to avoid a need to have a special township meeting should expenses exceed current spending. Mrs. Corder says if you have it in your budget, you will spend it. Trustee Kirschhoffer briefly explains a bookkeeper error to the line item, which Nancy Lech has since corrected. Trustee Miller comments if there are plans to decrease the reliance on the attorneys, he doesn't understand why the budget is increasing. Whitmore says he doesn't plan to spend it all, adding this is how it is done in business. Mildred Corder feels once the attorneys are aware of how much money is in the budget for legal fees, they will find a way to spend it all.

Attorney Tiffany Nelson-Jaworski interjects that the attorney's only work on what has been directed to them and it is up to the township to control legal expenses.

Trustee Corey Kirschhoffer says she hopes the township will be using attorney fees to stop the forest preserve from taking all the land in Newport Township. Noting the district recently acquired ~60 acres in Newport, she feels we must do something, or property taxes will increase and taxing body budgets will go down. Kirschhoffer says she has spoken out at Lake County Board Meetings and Lake County Forest Preserve Meetings indicating this stance. Kirschhoffer says spending Newport legal money to try to get some of our money back will be good money spent. Resident Susan Zingle says she was not planning on speaking tonight, but hearing Trustee Kirschhoffer comment on behalf of Newport residents, she has decided to speak up. Ms. Zingle says she is a supporter of the Lake County Forest Preserve. Kirschhoffer interjects she is too. Susan Zingle continues that if Newport wastes township money fighting something she supports, then the township is wasting her money twice. Kirschhoffer interjects saying the forest preserve is off the tax rolls. Zingle understands, countering the forest preserve also doesn't put kids in schools and cars on roads. Kirschhoffer agrees, and says she enjoys the forest preserve, but only where it is useful. Trustee Kirschhoffer doesn't agree with the forest preserve taking property that could be used for commercial purposes and comments legal spending to attempt to get township money back is a good use of taxpayer money.

Motion to Adjourn: Whitmore requests a motion to adjourn the General Township Budget & Appropriation Hearing.

Motion by Crittenden; seconded by Kirschhoffer to adjourn.

Voice Vote: Ayes, all; Nays none. Motion passed 5-0.

Hearing was adjourned at 6:50 p.m.

Dated the 20th day of May, 2015

s/ Debbie Spurgeon

Debbie Spurgeon, Township Clerk