

Village of Fox Crossing  
Special Meeting of the Board of Trustees – Budget Workshop  
Municipal Complex – Arden Tews Assembly Room  
Monday, October 4, 2021 - 5:00 p.m.

Minutes

1. Call to Order

President Dale Youngquist called the workshop to order at 5:00 p.m. Clerk Darla Fink noted those present including: President Youngquist, Trustee Michael Van Dyke, Trustee Kris Koeppe, Trustee Gregory Ziegler, Trustee Mark Englebert, Trustee Dale McNamee, Trustee Barbara Hanson, Village Manager Jeffrey Sturgell, Director of Community Development George Dearborn, Director of Finance Myra Piergrossi, Fire Chief Brian Harbison, Assistant Fire Chief Todd Sweeney, and Municipal Judge Timothy Hogan. There were three attendees.

2. Overview of the 2022 Budget

Director Piergrossi presented the overview of the 2022 Proposed Budget. She stated this was a difficult budget to balance due to the very low Net New Construction which is anticipated to continue into next year as well. The debt levy limit for debt service payments was increased this year as well. The Village could increase the levy limit even further if needed. With the levy limit increase, the assessed tax rate will decrease by an estimated 2.28% which comes out to \$4.90 per thousand dollars of assessed value. At this time, some items in the budget are still estimated due to figures not being available yet. She advised the Village does not qualify for the expenditure restraint program which will affect revenue in 2023. The proposed budget has fund balance estimated at 36% of next year's budgeted expenditures, which is 6% over the Village's policy of 20%-30%, but still acceptable.

There were three new full time positions requested in the 2022 budget that were cut prior to today's Workshop including a Community Development Department Assistant/Stormwater Technician, Engineering Technician/Public Works Inspector, and Police Detective. For 2022, we will be in the third and final year of the SAFER Grant in which our costs will only be offset by 35% of wages for 2022. In 2023, the Village will be 100% responsible for this cost and the Grant will expire. Medical Insurance costs came in 2.9% lower than 2021, Dental Insurance costs are estimated to increase approximately 5% for the upcoming year with a further increase expected in 2023, and Wisconsin Retirement System rates came in at a decreased cost of 0.25% and a small increase for protected employees of 0.20%.

Director Piergrossi introduced the items that will be highlighted throughout the budget process including the Equipment Replacement Fund, TIFs, Capital Projects/Grants, use of the Clayton Settlement funds, and use of ARPA (American Rescue Plan Act) grant funds.

3. Presentation of Departmental Budgets

Judicial

Director Piergrossi noted an accomplishment from this department which is a process change to moving pre-trials to a virtual format to decrease expenditures. Overall there was a decrease in expenses for 2022. Municipal Judge Hogan explained the new pretrial process to the Board, and stated the new process is saving money in attorney travel and overall court costs from the Village Prosecutor. There have been very few trials recently which is a significant cost. Trial numbers have been lower likely due to COVID. The number of citations issued has been increasing recently, and this is expected to continue assuming COVID cases continue to decrease.

### Fire Department

Director Piergrossi noted this is the third year of the SAFER grant, which is a decrease in revenue compared to previous years. The Fire Department requested to change the Fire Department Chaplain position from a volunteer position to a 60 annual hour position. Chief Harbison clarified that this is a request from the Chief, not from the Chaplain. The Chaplain comes to most trainings, attends ceremonies, is available on call for traumatic incidents, and is available to counsel families or other officers when needed. The Village Board questioned if the department will be able to keep this position to 60 hours as we can't have the Chaplain working extra hours and only getting paid for 60 hours. Director Piergrossi confirmed an employee can't volunteer a portion of their time and be paid for another part of your time. The Board brought up the discussion that was started at a previous board meeting regarding the pay level for firefighters being too low as well as the disparity between positions that are doing essentially the same job. Chief Harbison stated he has been working with Director Piergrossi on this as wages have remained constant without increase for a number of years. He agrees that our staff shouldn't be operating million dollar pieces of equipment for \$10/hour. The Board asked how these wage changes will affect the budget. Director Piergrossi indicated this is currently on her desk for review and the hope is to bring the wage changes to the Village Board at the December meeting to become effective January 1, 2022.

In the 0241 Building Maintenance Account, there is a request to replace the bay service door at Station 40 and for the replacement of two overhead doors at Station 40 which will be offset with fund balance.

In the 0320 Subscription and Dues Account, there is an increase due to Spectrum changing their rules that government buildings now have to pay for their subscriptions rather receiving this service for free. Station 41 needs internet connection through Spectrum so the bundled package with cable actually decreased costs. Station 40's service was a new cost but since this location is the Emergency Operation Center (EOC), certain TV stations may be needed in an emergency situation. The Fire Department and IT will be looking into this further to see if there are any other options in the future.

In the 0335 Training Account, the department has requested \$2,700 to purchase CPR mannequins and also \$2,680 for the regional safety officer class, both amounts being offset with fund balance. In the 0340 Operating Supplies Account includes a request for \$3,600 for the purchase of three heavy duty recliners at Station 40 which will be offset with fund balance, and \$3,000 for an increase required EMS supplies due to new safety protocols and costs. The Board asked if the Chief will be doing some price shopping on these recliners for this amount. Chief Harbison indicated the recliners that are currently at the station are residential recliners and are not meant for this amount of use. These type of heavy duty recliners are easy to clean and sanitize, have better warranties, and will last much longer.

In the 0346 Uniform Expenses Account, there is an increased cost to the firefighter gear for the annual ten sets to be purchased. In the 0361 Operational Equipment Supplies Account, the department is looking to replace two AED units which will be included in the Equipment Replacement Fund going forward. They are also requesting \$3,100 for a heat reduction fan for rescue operations and \$1,200 for a 360 degree camera for site inspections, training, and for use in investigations. All of these costs in the 0361 Account will be offset with fund balance. In the 0372 Crack Sealing Program Account, the cost listed is to be split with the Recreation Department to crack seal the Community Center parking lot and will be offset with fund balance.

In the 0390 Other Supplies EOC Account, with the EOC being moved to the Fire Station 40 training room, there are a couple items that will be needed in the next few years to make the Center what

it needs to be to be effective. These include \$4,000 to remove carpet and install new carpet tile/transition strips, \$11,000 to purchase training room tables and chairs to build modular structures to allow for an EOC setup, \$15,000 in IT items to rewire and network for the EOC, add security cameras and a card reader (these IT items were not included in the budget but are recommended to be added and would be offset with fund balance). These additions to the EOC were recommended by the accreditation team, but have yet to be completed.

Director Piergrossi noted the Ladder Truck is now included in the ERF which requires using the debt service levy limit. Annually, the Village is funding \$89,551 annually for the new Ladder Truck.

The Village Board took a short break at 6:55 p.m. The group reconvened at 7:07 p.m.

A resident, Elizabeth Vorpahl, 149 Harry's Gateway, requested to address the Board regarding a concern on the Fox River and in Little Lake Butte des Morts. She stated there is a large quantity of duck weed and algae growing in this area. She stated the City of Neenah has a company that comes in to pull these weeds out. She spoke with Michael Kading of the City of Neenah to see how the process works. He advised the weeds are cut with the company's machinery and then is taken out by the truckload. The City then composts and sells it for \$1.00/bucket which generates revenue. Mr. Kading indicated this is built into the City's budget at an approximate cost of \$30,000 per year. He advised they also do receive some private contributions towards this program as well. Ms. Vorpahl asked if the Board to consider this as a program to add into the 2022 Budget. She stated the muskrats are now coming into this area and are affecting the residents as they are eating boat wires. She stated there is also a strong odor associated with the duckweed. She stated there are four condo associations along the Stroebe waterway that are being affected. She suggested partnering with the City of Neenah to use their resources to take care of this same issue for Fox Crossing. She offered to do the research legwork on this, and stated she has already been in contact with Mr. Kading on this to get the contractor's information, cost, etc. She stated the Village has a smaller area to be maintained than the City of Neenah does so it's likely the cost to the Village would be less. Trustee Englebert questioned if she was referring to the marsh area which would have to be regulated by the DNR. Ms. Vorpahl indicated the issue is not in the marsh area, but on the river/lake side, because there is no current to keep the water moving. She stated this is issue affects approximately 80 homes over a  $\frac{3}{4}$  mile stretch and the issue is getting worse year after year. Trustee Ziegler stated he feels it would be appropriate to get some research done on this to determine the cost before putting this into the budget. Ms. Vorpahl thanked the Board for their time.

### Community Development

Director Dearborn stated they have had some single family and multiple family projects come in this year and more coming next year. Their department is working on revamping the attraction method for commercial uses of properties in the Village. He explained his request for the additional employee that has already been denied. There are more and more stormwater issues that require physical site visits, monitoring of ponds, etc., but their department currently doesn't have any time for that. They are able to keep up with the required reports, but without actual site visits it's hard to get the actual data for the reports. Most communities our size have an employee under stormwater used for these exact purposes. He stated the Village's population keeps increasing but his staffing level has remained the same. He also requested a drone in the budget to use to make site visits much more efficient, but that was removed from the budget as well. He explained that ideally their department should be monitoring construction sites on a weekly or monthly basis but it's nearly impossible at this point. He stated they can probably work things with the amount of staff they have now for a few years, but eventually his staff will need to grow. Trustee Koeppel stated he would much rather see Director Dearborn focus on economic development rather than

having him or Manager Sturgell in the field evaluating ponds and stormwater issues, although he sees the importance in making sure we are compliant when an audit happens again.

Director Piergrossi stated permit revenues seem high due to the new Neenah High School building plans, electrical permits, plumbing permits, and other building/zoning permits. There are not many changes in the other budget accounts. The training account is slightly higher due to the Assistant Building Inspector obtaining further certifications and the Associate Planner continuing her path towards becoming certified.

### Clerk/Elections

Director Piergrossi advised revenues include an anticipated new reserve "Class B" license, though there are no known new licenses coming to the Village. All Bar Operator licenses will go through their bi-annual renewal in 2022 which will increase revenues in that account.

On the expenses side, there are significantly higher costs for elections as there will be four elections in 2022, compared to only two in 2021. Clerk Fink requested a small wage increase for the three Central Count Canvassers to match their wage with the Chief Inspector wages. Overall, the entire elections category increased approximately \$25,000 due to the increased number of elections. There is an increase in the Professional Services account due to the increased number of background checks associated with the increased Bar Operator applications. Training costs include the first year of Clerk's Institute for the new Deputy Clerk and third year of the Clerk's Institute for Clerk Fink. There is also an increase to the Elections Equipment Replacement Fund due to the addition of two Badger Books purchased last year.

### Finance

Director Piergrossi introduced the Finance Department's budget. The 210 Professional Services Account includes \$10,000 for the Impact Fee Study to ensure the Village is meeting new state statutes, as it has been many years since these fees have been evaluated. She detailed the need for this study to be completed. The \$10,000 fee is an estimated figure. A single audit will also be required due to the ARPA funds grant with a cost of \$2,600, both of which will be offset with fund balance.

In the 0310 Office Supplies Account there is a request for \$3,000 for two adjustable desk tops for two of her employees which will be offset with fund balance. They are still waiting to receive the two that were ordered this year, and this request will add two more to the department. The 0510 Insurance Account has a budgeted \$15,000 increase as the Village's overall liability insurance has increased. Property insurance has increased for the new storage building, and automobile and contractor's equipment insurance has increased due to added equipment and purchase cost increases. Director Piergrossi explained she has been working with Human Resource Director Burdick to reduce worker's compensation insurance costs by utilizing employees with work limitations in other departments.

### Administration

Director Piergrossi stated Human Resources is requesting a temporary employee to assist with some confidential items. They are looking for 120 hours at \$15.00/hour for this temporary position. This position will be getting old confidential personnel documents into Laserfiche. The 0398 Account has a rollover of \$10,000 for a personnel recruitment video which was approved for this year but will be rolled over to next year to be completed. Director Piergrossi explained the increase to the ERF looks according to percentage, however the main increase is in the Van 109 replacement cost.

Legislative

Trustee Englebert asked the status of the AV sound system project for the Arden Tews Assembly Room. Director Piergrossi advised these funds were rolled over into the 2022 budget.

Special Revenue Funds – Garbage

Director Piergrossi stated overall the suggestion is to leave garbage rates the same as last year. Landfill costs have increased to \$45.00/ton, recycling is decreasing to \$5.00/ton, and yard waste is remaining the same as this year at \$30.00/ton. There are my unknowns coming with the new leaf collection program, however they have budgeted for an additional 600 tons of waste for leaf collection. The Harter's Disposal contract will have maximum increase of 3%. The Board asked if additional laborers will be brought on to help with this program. Director Piergrossi advised the Streets Department already had an increase of one additional full time staff member, however they are considering bringing on a temporary crew to help with this operation. This year will be a big learning curve for this program to determine what is truly needed.

Director Piergrossi advised Superintendent Gallow is requesting a new vehicle, with 15% of the cost coming out of this fund due to the vehicle being used for leaf collection. The remaining 85% of the cost would be in the Street Department's budget used for other Village purposes. The request is for an F-550 Crew Cab Truck which would be large enough to transport the three person crew needed to operate the leaf collection equipment. The Village Board questioned if this large of a truck is needed for these purposes, and asked to put this item on the Budget "bubble" for further discussion later.

Director Piergrossi advised there is another \$75,000 going into Equipment Replacement Fund for garbage/recycling carts. There is also a smaller amount of \$20,000 set aside to purchase a number of new carts this year as well. The Village Board discussed removing the purchase of new carts as many were purchased last year, and these carts have a long life so there is no need to continue replacing them. Director Piergrossi suggested keeping some extra funds in the account which is not necessarily set aside specifically for the purchase of new carts. Trustee Koepp encouraged pursuing some type of education program to highlight the cost savings between garbage and recycling as this will reduce overall costs for the residents in years to come. Director Piergrossi stated we could spend some of the recycling funds to educate the residents on these cost savings and mail out with the utility bills.

4. **Motion to reconvene to the October 11, 2021 Budget Workshop which will begin immediately following the 6:00 p.m. Village Board Meeting**

At 9:12 p.m., **MOTION:** Trustee Van Dyke, seconded by Trustee Ziegler to reconvene to the October 11, 2021 Budget Workshop immediately following the Regular Village Board Meeting. Motion carried.

Respectfully submitted,

Darla M. Fink, Village Clerk

**Note:** *These minutes are not to be considered official until acted upon at an upcoming regular meeting, therefore, are subject to revision.*