

**Village of Fox Crossing  
Special Meeting of the Board of Trustees – Budget Workshop  
Municipal Complex – Arden Tews Assembly Room  
Monday, November 28, 2022 - 6:00 pm**

**Minutes**

**1. Call to Order & Pledge of Allegiance**

President Dale Youngquist called the workshop to order at 6:00 p.m. Village Clerk Darla Fink noted those present: President Dale Youngquist, Trustee Michael Van Dyke, Trustee Kris Koeppel, Trustee Gregory Ziegler, Trustee Mark Englebert, Trustee Dale McNamee, Trustee Barbara Hanson, Village Manager Jeffrey Sturgell, Director of Finance Jeremy Searl, Street Superintendent Randy Gallow, Director of Community Development George Dearborn, Fire Chief Brian Harbison, Assistant Fire Chief Todd Sweeney, Police Chief Scott Blashka, Director of Parks & Recreation Amanda Geiser, Utility Superintendent David Tracey, Director of Information Technology Tim Plagenz, Attorney Andy Rossmeissl, Engineer Lee Reibold, and Engineer Brad Werner. There were seven attendees.

**2. Introduction of Village Board Members and Village Staff**

President Youngquist introduced the Village Board and Staff attending the meeting. He also introduced the members of the Planning Commission, Sustainability Committee, Park and Recreation Commission, and Police and Fire Commission who were in attendance.

**3. Review of the Proposed 2023 Budget of the Village of Fox Crossing**

President Youngquist went through the highlights of the proposed budget. He thanked the Finance Director and Village Manager for their long hours to put together this proposed budget. He showed the current breakout for taxes that the Village receives between the Neenah and Menasha School District residences which come out to 27.23% and 22.09% respectively. The proposed levy for 2023 increased by a small amount to \$10,165,881 which is an increase of approximately 1.5%.

The highlights of the current budget include two School Resource Officer (SRO) positions, a restructured paid-on-call firefighter wage schedule, and due to the expiration of the SAFER Grant, all firefighter pay is now completely on the levy. This budget includes the use of just over \$1.3 Million Dollars from General Fund savings for one-time projects and purchases of capital items, rather than borrowing the funds for these items.

The assessed value in the Village increased overall approximately 12% from the prior year. Total Manufacturing property values in the Village decreased by 11% due to the loss of Clearwater Paper which affects the Village's overall value. Even considering the added expenses and a net new construction rate of 1.56%, the Village tax rate will decrease approximately 10% to \$4.45 per thousand dollars of property value. President Youngquist went through the changes in the Village Tax Rate for different home values, noting these figures assume the property's value has not changed from year to year. He presented charts showing the breakdown of how tax dollars are spent by department with the highest amounts being spent in the Police Department, Fire Department, Streets Department, and Parks and Recreation Department for labor costs as well as a considerable percentage being spent in Debt Service. He noted the Village's equalized tax rate is among the lowest when compared to surrounding communities. He also noted the recently passed referendum in the Town of Grand Chute to increase their levy by \$1 Million Dollars.

President Youngquist presented a chart showing our current debt compared to our debt capacity as set by the State. Our general obligation debt is approximately \$32 Million Dollars, leaving the Village with an unused debt portion of approximately \$82 Million Dollars. The state allows borrowing up to 5% of the Village's equalized value (approximately \$114 Million Dollars) and we are currently at an amount less than 28% of the maximum general obligation debt allowed.

President Youngquist went through the Water budget highlights with an updated water rate assuming a 21% increase in water rates beginning in February. The Village has been working with the PSC for over a year to update our water rates, as the last rate case hasn't been done since 2011 with the last rate change taking place in 2012. This updated rate will provide a 6% rate of return to the Village. This budget includes no funding for depreciation, new borrowing of \$2.37 Million Dollars, and a replacement of the Plant #3 Zeolite system for \$160,000. He compared our current water rates to other local municipalities which we were among the lowest. Even after our new water rate goes in effect, we will still be average as compared to other local municipalities.

In Sewer budget highlights, there is a 5% rate increase. Debt payments and sewerage treatment plant costs have both increased. The plan is to use \$665,000 from the Town of Clayton settlement funds for a significant project on Brighton Beach Road. There is no new borrowing for sewer in the upcoming year and depreciation is only partially funded. He stated the Village's sewer rate as compared to other local municipalities is among the lower half.

In the Stormwater budget, there is no change to the Village's Equivalent Residential Unit (ERU) rate. Two new ponds are set to be constructed on Jacobsen Road between Irish Road and CTH CB and on Shady Lane between CTH CB and Cold Spring Road. There is new borrowing in the amount of \$3.145 Million Dollars as well as the use of \$2 Million Dollars in Town of Clayton settlement funds. Depreciation is being partially funded in this utility as well. When comparing to other local municipalities, we do have one of the higher stormwater rates, lower than only the City of Appleton. However, we do have the highest ERU per square foot by a significant number.

The Board commended the Village Manager and all Department Heads on putting together a very fiscally responsible budget and for the amount of work put into its preparation. The Board discussed the importance of maintaining night and weekend coverage at the Fire Department even though the SAFER Grant has expired. The use of the Town of Clayton settlement funds helps the Village to borrow less especially in these times of higher borrowing rates. The Board is making an effort to alleviate the stormwater issues throughout the Village, but reminded the residents that it takes time to design and construct these ponds.

4. **Close the Public Hearing**

*Joe Nemechek – 1992 Susan Avenue*

Mr. Nemechek commended the Board on this budget. He stated he wishes we could have accelerated a few of the projects, specifically on Jacobsen Road and Irish Road. He stated the new high school is going to create problems for people living in those areas. Jacobsen Road is already getting a lot more traffic than before, with many more apartment complexes being built in the near future. There are already people wandering on these roads which will only increase with the upcoming school traffic. He stated we need to look at signaling the intersections at Irish Road and CTH II and Clayton Avenue and CTH II. He questioned what will happen with the students living within the two mile radius of the school that will not be riding the bus and will be biking or walking.

**MOTION:** Trustee Ziegler, seconded by Trustee Koeppe to close the Public Hearing. Motion carried.

At 7:14 p.m., President Youngquist adjourned the Public Hearing of the Proposed 2023 Budget.

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.*