

Village of Fox Crossing
Special Meeting of the Board of Trustees – Budget Workshop #2
Municipal Complex – Arden Tews Assembly Room
Monday, October 14, 2024 – 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 (via teleconference), Trustee Kris Koeppe, Trustee Gregory Ziegler, Trustee Kate McQuillan, Trustee Deb Swiertz (via teleconference) Trustee Barbara Hanson, Village Manager Jeffrey Sturgell, Finance Director Jeremy Searl, Police Chief Scott Blashka, Police Captain Tim Callan, Police Administrative Assistant Erin LeMaheieu, Municipal Judge Timothy Hogan, Municipal Court Manager Mandy Bartelt, Director of Community Development George Dearborn, Fire Chief Todd Sweeney, Director of Information Technology Tim Plagenz, and Director of Parks and Recreation Amanda Geiser. There were five attendees.

2. Presentation of Departmental Budgets

Judicial

Director Searl advised there is a small increase in court cost revenues from the prior year due to the Police Department being fully staffed, so we're seeing more citations being issued, along with the High School in the Village increasing the quantity of citations as well. Contracted Services shows a small increase due to a higher need for the use of interpreters.

Director Searl advised there is an increase of approximately 30% in the salary accounts. Judge Hogan requested the Board to look at his wage as it hasn't changed in many years, and we've had increased growth with the new high school in the number of citations. Director Searl presented a survey of similar size communities which shows Judge Hogan has a lower salary than all other comparable size communities, with a higher number of cases. The proposed change is to increase the Municipal Judge's wages to \$12,000 per year from \$8,251 which will be effective on May 1, 2025, which is the start of a new term as his wage can't change mid-term.

Judge Hogan stated the biggest change from last year is in general the higher number of citations and the addition of the high school. They have been holding court at the high school which seems to be working well for the students as they are not having to miss class as much to attend court.

Trustee Ziegler asked if the Municipal Court Manager's wages will be increased as well for the same reasons as Judge Hogan's wages. Director Searl advised the Court Manager's wages are reviewed through the normal wage review process at the end of the year like all other employees. Her wage is not tied to the Judge's wage in any way. The Board asked how Jeremy and Jeff arrived at the \$12,000 wage for the Municipal Judge. Director Searl advised that there was no specific calculation to arrive at this number, but it was the amount that would fit into the proposed budget.

Parks & Recreation Department

Director Searl stated there have been increases in revenues for park rentals. The only change requested for salary accounts is for an increase in the pay ranges for summer help and mowing staff. These changes don't amount to much of an increase overall, but we have some returning staff that should be increased along with specialized class leaders, coaches, etc. that are hard to fill positions.

In the 02-10 Professional Contracted Services Account, there is a significant increase offset with fund balance to fund the Schildt Park improvement plan (\$5,000), removal of a dock at the Rydell Conservancy (\$14,000), and planning for Woodland Prairie Park which is a rollover from 2024 (\$10,000). He advised Director Geiser can't move forward with Woodland Prairie Park until the storage building currently being used for salt storage is torn down.

The 02-40 Repair/Maintenance Account includes painting at O'Hauser South Pavilion (\$7,000 offset with fund balance) and replacement of the Fritse Park slide (\$6,000 offset with fund balance). The 03-40 Disc Golf Operations Account includes some increases for the new beginner course that has been installed but all costs are offset with disc golf revenues. The 03-46 Clothing/Uniform Allowance Account includes a small increase of \$100 per staff member.

Director Geiser stated they are still calculating signup/attendee numbers for the year, but the recreation program is on track to grow by 5% which was the goal at the beginning of the year. Trustee Koeppel asked about any grant funding for the upcoming year. Director Geiser advised she never wants to rely on grant funding and will continue to apply for any grants as they come up.

Director Searl advised there is a request to purchase a new SUV which will be dedicated for Park and Recreation use (\$35,000 offset with fund balance). This department has two full-time staff during the winter months and three full-time staff during the summer months that are having to share vehicles with other departments. Director Searl advised there is an addition of funds for tree plantings (\$5,000 offset with the Tree Planting Special Revenue Fund) and removal of ash trees (\$25,000 offset with Emerald Ash Borer (EAB) Fund). He noted the proposed budget uses the impact fees that are currently in place, however it should be noted the Impact Fee Study is on the horizon which may change many of these figures.

Trustee Ziegler asked about the funds budgeted for ADA modifications and what changes are needed. Director Geiser advised this is an "as needed" account that is used for adjustments to doors that are pulling harder or other adjustments that need to be made for ADA accommodations. He also asked about the cost for porta-potty rentals, and if the Village has looked into owning our own as to not pay the rental costs. Director Geiser advised this is not a business she is looking to get into and noted as an example that in the current contracts, we can contact the leasing company if any sort of damage or vandalism occurs to any of the units.

In the Park Capital Project Fund, there are a few projects to be completed this year. Manager Sturgell introduced the Trestle Trail repair project which is a joint project with the City of Menasha for a total cost of \$260,000 with half being paid by the City and \$130,000 offset with borrowing. Director Geiser is still going back and forth with the City as far as the scope of this project, however the Trail is coming up on 20 years old, with some decking and post improvements completed in 2015.

The Park Capital Project Fund also includes the resurfacing of American Drive Trail from County Highway BB to East Shady Lane (\$440,000 offset with borrowing). Trustee Koeppel asked if we'll be able to get as favorable of pricing this upcoming year for these types of projects. Engineer Reibold stated he thinks we could get very favorable bids on this project as well, however much of the cost comes from driveways differing between concrete and asphalt. When the estimate was put together, it included the assumption that all driveways will need to be replaced which was conservative.

Park Capital Projects also includes replacement of the O'Hauser Park play equipment for a cost of \$400,000 (\$96,200 offset with ERF and \$303,800 offset with borrowing), replacement of the Westfield Park play equipment for a cost of \$93,000 (\$42,653 offset with ERF and \$50,347 offset

with borrowing), restoration of the Rydell Conservancy Shoreline for a cost of \$110,000 (offset with borrowing rolled over from 2024), repairs and recoloring of the Wittman Park courts (\$35,000 offset with borrowing), and replacing the Community Center roof (\$115,000 offset with borrowing and split with Fire Department). Manager Sturgell explained the Rydell Conservancy project had to be rolled over as it is taking time to get through the Wisconsin DNR. Trustee McQuillan asked if the Wittman Park courts will be double painted for pickleball and tennis. Director Geiser advised they will be double painted, but this is the reason for the cost increase due to the high demand for pickleball courts. There have been discussions about constructing dedicated courts at Schildt Park for pickleball.

3. Recess for Regular Village Board Meeting

At 5:56 p.m., **MOTION:** Trustee Ziegler, seconded Trustee Hanson to adjourn the budget workshop until after completion of the Village Board meeting. Motion carried via voice vote.

4. Reconvene Upon Completion of Regular Board Meeting

At 7:05 p.m., **MOTION:** Trustee Ziegler, seconded by Trustee McQuillan to reconvene the Budget Workshop. Motion carried via voice vote

5. Continue Presentation of Departmental Budgets

Police Department

Director Searl stated the Fines and Penalties revenue increased \$15,000, primarily due to the department being fully staffed, part of the freeway being in our jurisdiction, and our officers ability to be on the road more and issue more citations. In wage and benefits, there is an increase for the School Resource Officer in the intergovernmental budget item line, however those expenses are passed along to the school district per our agreement. Police wages include a 2% increase in April and another 2% increase in October as agreed to in the union contract (second year of a four-year contract). Director Searl went over the changes in the makeup of the Police Department in 2024, but advised there is nothing planned for 2025, even though the wage and benefits budget items appear to have a lot of change from year to year. He also noted a small decrease in overtime for the communication technicians due to the new hours in the Police Department.

In the 03-46 Uniform Allowance Account, there is \$6,700 offset with fund balance for outfitting new officers if necessary. There is a small increase in the Investigative Expenses Account to rebuild the forensic computer (\$1,500 offset with fund balance). Director Searl noted a decrease in Vehicle Maintenance costs since switching our fuel source. Chief Blashka stated this has been extending the lives of our vehicles on the ERF and allowed for the addition of another squad, and thanked the Village Board for their generosity to allow the addition to the fleet.

Director Searl stated the Police Department is looking to install two additional FLOCK cameras in the Village (\$1,300 offset with fund balance) which are used to identify license plates, and the subscription to this service allows the Village access to the nationwide FLOCK database. Chief Blashka stated he is checking with neighboring municipalities to see where best to place these new cameras, as Winnebago County, Neenah, Grand Chute, and Menasha are also installing new cameras this year.

Director Searl brought up the ERF schedule while discussing vehicles. The Police Department plans to replace one squad car (\$44,558) and one detective squad (\$24,000) with funds from the ERF. They will also be replacing one police van with an SUV (approximately \$25,000 offset with funds from the ERF). The former police van will be sold to the Stormwater utility for \$17,500 and utilized by the future Stormwater Technician. Director Searl noted this van is already equipped

with shelving and other built-ins that will make it an easy transition for what the Stormwater Technician will need.

Chief Blashka stated his goal was to have a supervisor on staff 24/7, and with the changes made this year, they have not had any patrol hours where a supervisor was not on staff, so this change to staffing has worked very well for the program.

Trustee Hanson asked about the decrease in the Education Incentive of \$1,600 in accordance with the union contract. Chief Blashka advised as part of the contract negotiations, the education incentive is now built into the overall wage rate and will end completely in 2026.

Chief Blashka stated he has been compiling numbers from the School Resource Officer (SRO) and wants to continue to work towards having two officers in the High School. Currently, the department has been subsidizing officers at the school to help alleviate burnout, participate in drills, work extracurricular games, and provide backup for the SRO.

Special Revenue Funds

Director Searl advised many of the changes with special revenue funds were handled with a Resolution earlier this year for department specific funds. At 7:34 p.m., Trustee Van Dyke signed off the teleconference.

Trustee Ziegler asked Chief Blashka how the K9 and K9 officer are doing. Chief Blashka stated he did not bring this year's statistics, but the K9 Unit has been very active, and things are looking good for several more years with this team. Director Searl noted the K9 still has not cost taxpayers any money, and has been completely funded by the special revenue fund, donations, etc.

General Equipment Replacement Fund (ERF) Discussion

Director Searl stated he went back to the beginning of the Equipment Replacement Fund to get a full picture of where the fund sits today. The fund was started in 2003 and in total \$13.2 Million Dollars of levy funds have been put into ERF. The fund has earned \$785,000 in interest over the lifetime and has earned \$1.6 Million dollars in vehicle trade-ins and sales. The balance at end of 2023 was \$6.4 Million Dollars for future equipment replacement. Director Searl went through different analyses of original purchase costs, replacement estimate costs, replacement percentages that we currently sit at in total and by department and looked at how the fund sits for the upcoming five years and in the long term. The Board discussed some different options including continuing to fully fund items, start to partially fund items, start borrowing for purchases, leasing items, or using some of these funds for Village projects rather than utilizing the ERF. Director Searl advised this discussion does not need to have any impact on the current proposed budget but wanted to bring this in front of the Board while we have the time to discuss.

President Youngquist stated he thinks the Village is in a better position than he expected. He thinks many of the smaller ticket items could go by the wayside and not be accounted for in a fund like this. He stated the Board needs to evaluate the program even further and he is not opposed to changing it but thinks it could be simplified to only include vehicles or determine some other cut-off amount. His suggestion is to leave the fund as it is for now and suggested the Board look at this further after budget in Spring 2025. Manager Sturgell stated he liked seeing this analysis and thinks there is a hybrid model similar to how the park equipment is being replaced at O'Hauser Park this year that could be used going forward (partial ERF funding and partial borrowing). He thanked the Board Members for their consideration on this.

6. **Motion to reconvene to the October 21, 2024 Budget Workshop which will begin at 5:00 p.m.**

At 8:20 p.m., **MOTION:** Trustee McQuillan, seconded by Trustee Hanson, to reconvene to the October 21, 2024 Budget Workshop which will begin at 5:00 p.m. Motion carried via voice vote.

Respectfully submitted,

Darla M. Fink, WCMC, Village Clerk

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