

**CHARTER TOWNSHIP OF WHITE LAKE**  
**Approved Minutes of the Special Board of Trustees Meeting**  
**September 28, 2021**

Supervisor Kowall called the meeting to order at 6:00 p.m. The meeting was held via Zoom video conferencing. He then led the Pledge of Allegiance.

Clerk Noble called the roll:

Present: Rik Kowall, Supervisor – White Lake, MI  
Mike Roman, Treasurer – White Lake, MI  
Anthony L. Noble, Clerk – White Lake, MI  
Liz Smith, Trustee – White Lake, MI  
Andrea C. Voorheis, Trustee – White Lake, MI  
Michael Powell, Trustee – White Lake, MI

Absent: Scott Ruggles, Trustee

Also Present: Daniel T. Keller, Police Chief  
John Holland, Fire Chief  
Elaine Homeister, Accountant  
Jeanine Smith, Assessor  
Jennifer Edens, Recording Secretary

## **AGENDA**

It was **MOVED** by Clerk Noble, **SUPPORTED** by, Trustee Voorheis to approve the Agenda. The motion **PASSED** by roll call vote (Powell/yes, Voorheis/yes, Smith/yes, Noble/yes, Roman/yes, Kowall/yes).

Supervisor Kowall noted that the intention of this meeting is to introduce the 2022 budget and that it is not being voted on tonight. He further indicated that the Truth in Taxation is an action that is required every year by the state. It is based on the value of local property and captures new and existing properties that is required by law.

## **PUBLIC COMMENT**

No public comment.

## **BUDGET DISCUSSION**

### **- Fire Department**

Supervisor Kowall noted the budget is similar to prior years. He highlighted that the fire budget includes two additional firemen, which will increase the force and help eliminated some of the overtime. It will also put the department in a better position to get Station III open. He believes this takes the department from eighteen to twenty-one firefighters.

Trustee Voorheis loves that Station III is open part-time and she looks forward to the additional firefighters.

Chief Holland shared that he has two firefighters off on long-term medical and a retirement coming up in November. He declared it has been challenging with the manpower or lack thereof. He noted with two additional firefighters they would have seven per shift. He too wants to get Station III open. As for overtime, he notes this budget cuts it in half. He worked with Elaine to make sure that the department can sustain the addition of two additional persons. He shared the lack of applicants but notes he will be doing active recruiting.

Trustee Powell can see where the drop in ~~drop-in~~ revenue is expected this year. He questions why there is a decrease in revenues when there is an expected increase in property taxes. He further questioned as to what is being reduced in expenditures to allow for the reduction in revenue as it relates to the two new firemen.

Elaine Homeister responded that it is the use of fund balance. In 2021 the Township was budgeted to spend \$800,000 of what used to be the 04M money. She notes that does not appear to be happening this year, so those funds will go back in savings. In 2022, it is budgeted to use \$570,000 of that fund balance. She noted that is the difference and that it is not true revenues but use of the savings. She furthered that the revenues are not reduced, as the Township is taking in more tax revenue. As for sustainability of two new firefighters, she notes that at the end of the last year, there was approximately a \$3 million balance in the fire department. She furthered that both the police and fire have been able to grow their fund balance for expenditures and staffing.

Trustee Powell clarified that the bottom line is, even though the 2021 budget was \$80,000 more, the department is not going to use all of it so the expenditure this year will be more than last year at the final accounting.

Elaine Homeister indicated that the expenditures for 2022, if everything is spent as programed will be more in the end. She also shared that new vehicles that were not purchased in 2021 will push forward into 2022.

Supervisor Kowall reminded this is preliminary and that the Board should reach out to Chief Holland if they have any questions.

- **Police Department**

Chief Keller is asking for one additional officer, which will bring the force up to forty-one overall.

Clerk Noble noted that it appears Chief Keller has saved quite a bit of money.

Chief Keller noted that he is particular about his budget and that overtime is looked at weekly. He also noted that Elaine does a good job with budgeting. He ensures that the fund balance is brought down to zero as much as possible. He shared that they always put funds in their fund balance and that it is currently at approximately 65%.

- **Sewer and Water**

Supervisor Kowall noted that a lot of money is paid to Oakland County to take care of the Township's sewer system.

Clerk Noble complimented Director Potter for being conservative with his numbers and being fiscally responsible.

- **General Township**

Supervisor Kowall noted that 2020 was 6.7 and amended 2021 was 10.884 which was a shift of the \$5 million that was set aside by Board action to improvement and revolving. He noted that the Township is well within its budget and that the proposed budget for 2022 is just over \$6 million.

Trustee Powell noted the fees and per diem on page two and the audit fees that increased, and questions why they are attributed to the Board of Trustees versus the general township.

Elaine responded that the fees and per diem, in the past were primarily for the recording secretary. However, with COVID and having to do virtual meetings, utilizing MERGE, the costs have increased. She noted that \$9,000 has already been spent and it isn't even the end of the year. The numbers were increased for safety. She continued that the audit fees have always gone under the Board because it is a Board expense. The Michigan Accounting General Ledger Rules identifies this as falling under the Board of Trustees.

Trustee Powell asked how much was being allocated for the new board room. To which Elaine noted she doesn't have the specifics available, but that the betterment and improvement account can be used.

- **Parks and Recreation**

Supervisor Kowall notes that the budget calls out the plans and recommendation from Parks and Recreation and for the monies for the larger projects. He furthered that the numbers are subject to receiving a grant.

Trustee Roman commented that the soccer and baseball fields were never designed to be money makers. They were designed to maintain, and they cost a lot of money. It is a provided service to the community.

Trustee Powell noted that soccer and baseball clubs have offered to other communities to pay for maintenance and to build new fields. He asked if the Township does not charge a rental fee as he reads it that the Township charges \$6,000 and pays \$60,000. He believes the Township may want to look into organization contributions.

Treasurer Roman does not disagree and noted that enough revenue is not taken in to cover the expenses.

- **Rubbish Fund**

Supervisor Kowall noted the Township is fortunate that the Board entered into the five-year contract it did at the last renewal. He added that he still gets comments and compliments with the added hazardous material day.

- **PA 188**

Supervisor Kowall noted the PA 188 money is doing exactly what it was intended to do and that the return rate is doing well. It is generating and continuing to grow. He continued that this fund will continue to grow and that he would love to the Township add to this fund and be able to fund improvements on its own and have the Township benefit in different ways. It is his hope to continue this.

Trustee Powell request the Board consider putting together a connection special assessment district either by petition or Township Board initiated. It would be 100% voluntary and the Township could assist people in connection. Not only does it assist in operating the system, but it would bring a cashflow into the system. He will be pushing for a special assessment district to get people connected into the sanitary sewer system.

Supervisor Kowall thinks that it is a good idea and that further conversations can be had at the sewer meetings.

- **Improvement Revolving**

Supervisor Kowall noted that the Township has been able to set funds aside and is in a good position.

Elaine indicated that at the end of last year the Township had approximately \$3.1 million. With the \$5 million transferred this year it is at approximately \$8.1 million.

- **Drug Forfeiture**

Supervisor Kowall noted there is not a ton of it right now.

- **CBDG**

Supervisor Kowall noted there is a certain amount of allocation and that it is being watched to see what happens this year. He finds it disheartening that funds were tightened up as there are a lot of people who could use these benefits. He believes this Board has done a good job of putting moneys were needed and noted that it makes a difference in people's lives.

- **Sewer Maintenance**

Trustee Powell shared that this it was discussed with Commerce Township at a recent meeting to reevaluate going to the private sector to maintain the sewer system instead of relying on the county.

Trustee Powell commented as testified by Chief Holland and Chief Keller, it is difficult to get personnel and especially qualified/expertise personnel. He opined that maybe it is not necessarily money that keeps people from applying. He noted that every community out there needs employees and that they are sweetening up the benefits they offer. He would hate to see the Township lose valuable employees to other communities. He looks to Supervisor Kowall to give people a reason to stay and new people to come to the Township. He agrees that the younger people don't think of dollars and that it is the benefits that they seek.

Supervisor Kowall agrees and notes that it is being investigated.

Supervisor Kowall noted for the public that the projected proposed budget for general township for 2022 is \$6,040,258.00.

**PUBLIC HEARING – TO HEAR COMMENT REGARDING THE LEVYING OF THE TAXES VOTED FOR BY THE PUBLIC (TRUTH IN TAXATION)**

**It was MOVED by Supervisor Kowall, SUPPORTED by, Trustee Smith to open the public hearing. The motion PASSED by roll call vote (Kowall/yes, Roman/yes, Noble/yes, Smith/yes, Voorheis/yes, Powell/yes).**

No public comment.

**It was MOVED by Supervisor Kowall, SUPPORTED by, Clerk Noble to close the public hearing. The motion PASSED by roll call vote (Voorheis/yes, Kowall/yes, Smith/yes, Noble/yes, Powell/yes, Roman/yes).**

**RESOLUTION #21-037, TRUTH IN TAXATION**

Assessor Smith noted that these are the millages that were voted for by the voters and are required by state law to be approved by the Board.

Supervisor Kowall noted it allows new, improved, and current properties to be taxed at that rate.

Treasurer Roman advised that all the police and fire millages expire December 31<sup>st</sup> of this year and that renewals need to be thought about. He clarified that they need to be renewed for the 2022 winter.

**It was MOVED by Trustee Smith, SUPPORTED by, Trustee Powell to approve Resolution #21-037, Truth in Taxation. The motion PASSED by roll call vote (Kowall/yes, Roman/yes, Smith/yes, Powell/yes, Voorheis/yes, Noble/yes).**

Trustee Powell advised that the Township is going into negotiations for easements for the watermain down Bogie Lake Road. He added that he certainly hopes that it is not limited to just the watermain as there should be pathways on the easements as well.

Director Potter noted the watermain will be 100% inside the public right away. There are no additional easements being purchased for the watermain.

Clerk Noble thanked Dawn and Elaine.

Trustee Smith declared great job to everyone for what is the last virtual meeting.

#### **ADJOURNMENT**

**It was MOVED by Supervisor Kowall, SUPPORTED by, Trustee Voorheis to adjourn. The motion PASSED by roll call vote (Kowall/yes, Roman/yes, Voorheis/yes, Smith/yes, Powell/yes, Noble/yes).**

#### **Meeting adjourned at 6:47 p.m.**

I, Anthony L. Noble, the duly elected and qualified Clerk of the Charter Township of White Lake, County of Oakland, State of Michigan, hereby certify that the foregoing is a true copy of the September 28, 2021 special board meeting minutes.



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Anthony L. Noble, Clerk  
White Lake Township  
Oakland County, Michigan