

**CALL TO ORDER**

The regular meeting of the Supervisor and Board of Trustees of Wheeling Township, for March 28, 2017 was held in the Paula Ulreich Meeting Room, in the Township of Wheeling, 1616 North Arlington Heights Road, Arlington Heights, Illinois. Supervisor Penner called the meeting to order at 8:00 p.m.

**ROLL CALL**

Clerk Gauza called the roll and the following members were present: Supervisor Penner, Trustee Michael Domrzalski, Trustee Robert Hoban, Trustee Ruth O'Connell, Trustee JoAnne Schultz, and Clerk Joanna Gauza.

Also in attendance: Wheeling Township Assessor Jerry Sadler, Attorney Howard Metz, and Wheeling Township Director of Finance and Administration Josephine Stellato.

Absent: None.

**PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE**

Supervisor Penner led those assembled in the Pledge of Allegiance.

**APPROVAL OF MINUTES**

**MOTION # 1: APPROVAL OF MEETING MINUTES – FEBRUARY 28, 2017**

Motion by Trustee Schultz, seconded by Trustee O'Connell, to approve minutes of February 28, 2017.

ROLL CALL VOTE: AYES: Schultz, O'Connell, Hoban, Domrzalski, Penner  
NAYS: None....Motion #1 Carried.

**AUDIT**

**MOTION #2: AUDIT FOR CEMETERY FUND**

Motion by Trustee Domrzalski, seconded by Trustee Hoban to approve batch #32817 against the Cemetery Fund, in the amount of \$372.00 to be paid.

ROLL CALL VOTE: AYES: Domrzalski, Hoban, Schultz, O'Connell, Penner  
NAYS: None....Motion #2 Carried

**MOTION # 3: AUDIT FOR ROAD AND BRIDGE FUND**

Motion by Trustee Domrzalski, seconded by Trustee Schultz, to approve batch #408, and #409 against the Road and Bridge Fund, in the amount of \$25,283.57 to be paid.

ROLL CALL VOTE: AYES: Domrzalski, Schultz, O'Connell, Hoban, Penner  
NAYS: None....Motion #3 Carried.

**MOTION #4: AUDIT FOR TOWN FUND**

Motion by Trustee Domrzalski, seconded by Trustee Schultz, to approve batch #609, #610, #611, #612 and #613 against the Town Fund, in the amount of \$439,715.48 to be paid.

ROLL CALL VOTE: AYES: Domrzalski, Schultz, O'Connell, Hoban, Penner  
NAYS: None....Motion #4 Carried.

**CITIZENS TO BE HEARD**

Fred May raised concerns about a meeting he had with Supervisor Penner, Administrator Stellato and the Township Attorney Florey. When Mr. May attempted to tape record the meeting, the Township Attorney did not consent to recording the discussion. They also indicated any attempt to record the meeting without consent is illegal. Mr. May indicated concern that at Board meetings, the Board and Supervisor do not engage in question and answer. Mr. May also stated a concern about lack of transparency in the abolition of the Highway Commissioner. He offered to give copy of written comments.

Christine Ross shared Mr. May's concerns. She stated she was concerned the two best Trustees were thrown off the Board. She was troubled about the lack of transparency with abolishing the Highway Commissioner.

In response to Christine Ross' statement, Trustee Domrzalski stated that for the record he was not thrown off the board; rather it was his personal decision not to run again.

Doris Wagner stated she is interested in transparency and that the referendum last year stated there would be a savings to the taxpayers. She stated she did not believe there was any savings.

Thomas Gauza thanked the Board. When the issue of abolishing the Highway Commissioner was raised, the Board left the decision to the Township residents by holding a referendum. A vigorous campaign was waged on the issue, the Township residents being fully informed decided by a vote of over 70% to abolish the Highway Commissioner position. "Tonight, we have heard some suggest that democracy should be overturned, I say not. Democracy should prevail." He then thanked the Board for its transparency and willingness to listen to the wishes of its residents.

**OFFICIALS' REPORTS**

**ASSESSOR:** Assessor Sadler reported:

- Senior renewal cards were mailed March 22, 2017. This is the Cook County Assessor's Office means of notifying seniors who have not returned their senior exemption renewal applications that the deadline to do so is April 7, 2017. They also sent the cards to properties that have not had an exemption on the property for a couple of years. Assessor's Office received many visitors due to this mailing.
- Exemption forms for homeowners who have lived in their home since January 1, 2006, and have an assessed value increase significant enough to qualify, were mailed forms March 9<sup>th</sup> to apply for the exemption provided their total gross household income is under \$100,000.
- Results for 2016 appeals filed with the Cook County Board of Review are available and the Wheeling Township Board of Review 2016 assessments have been finalized.
- Sidwell pages were received with changes due to any changes such as divisions or consolidations.
- Phone calls: 455  
Visitors: 431

**ADMINISTRATIVE REPORT:** Administrator Stellato reported:

Supervisor Penner, Administrator Stellato, and Attorney Florey met with residents Fred May and Laura Santowski on March 23, 2017 at 10AM. The meeting was initiated by Supervisor Penner to answer questions posed by Mr. May during Board meetings and in an email dated February 28, 2017.

Mr. May submitted a written list of three requests for the meeting. He shared his disapproval with the way Wheeling Township Board meetings are conducted and suggested the Township change its format to allow for questions from the public and answers by the Board. Attorney Florey explained that Wheeling Township follows the law according to the Township Code and Open Meetings Act.

Mr. May expressed his displeasure with the way the Road District was abolished and requested a qualitative analysis of the transition to the integrated road district. He is dissatisfied with the way it was handled and said he spoke to approximately 30 people who agreed with him. Supervisor Penner asked for a list of names so that she can contact them to provide information. Administrator Stellato was asked to share data from the unincorporated areas – the total population of Wheeling Township is 153,630, of which 1,120 reside in unincorporated areas. The total taxes paid by unincorporated residents last year to the Road District were \$4,946.50 yet \$515,000.00 was spent on unincorporated roads. Administrator Stellato said the Township has fielded many calls over the years with residents upset because they have to pay taxes for the unincorporated roads, as well as the roads in their residing cities and villages.

The Board presented the proposition to the electorate and 70% of those voting, voted to abolish the Road District. Since, January 1, 2017 things have been going well. Mr. May disagreed because he said the heavy equipment has damaged roads. Township records show that every spring, pot holes are addressed.

Mr. May would like to see a formal means of communication regarding right of way maintenance. Supervisor Penner remarked that in the past questions for unincorporated areas were directed to the Highway Department and nothing has changed. Highway Manager Neitzke has remained on the payroll and Administrator Stellato is available as well. Our website includes all contact information.

Trustee O'Connell felt it necessary to submit a written response because Mr. May singled her out in the email. Supervisor Penner read the response at the meeting. "A woman from Dunlo called the Republican Headquarters to talk to Trustee O'Connell about a neighbor's statement that roads would not be plowed and emergency vehicles would have difficulty getting in and out of the area. The woman has children with special needs. Trustee O'Connell comforted the very upset woman and assured her that the roads would be maintained". The former Commissioner only contracted for snow removal through December 2016 so the Township put out an emergency bid for snow and ice control for the remainder of the season. A contract was signed in December to assure the roads would be plowed beginning January 1. Mr. May expressed displeasure with the bid specifications.

Mr. May was not happy with the discussions and ended the meeting.

- Administrator Stellato met with representatives of Salvation Army about the closing of their counseling office in our building. The actual office will close at the end of June but we've been asked to provide a small space on Monday evenings so that one of their counselors can continue with court appointed domestic group counseling. Administrator Stellato advised them that Township funding for services would cease as of June 30, 2017 but that as long as we are able to do so, we will provide a space for the group counseling. We will also provide a small space for storage of paperwork associated with the group so the counselor does not have to carry it back and forth.
- The Wheeling Township Cemetery Trustees met on March 8, 2017. The proposed 2017-18 budget was again discussed. The majority of tombstone/foundation repair has been completed. The Board suggested replacing two to three trash receptacles, adding landscaping to the entrances, replacing bushes, shrubs and mulch to the north and east lot lines, and repair the remaining tombstones. We are awaiting quotes from Brothers Landscaping. They have done a terrific job and if the cost

remains the same as last year, we will sign a contract with them. The next meeting will be held in May or June at the cemetery.

- A \$250,000 Certificate of Deposit matured on March 13, 2017 at First Midwest Bank. They offered 0.012% interest rate to renew for one year. MB Financial offered a 0.65% rate and increased collateral so Administrator Stellato closed the CD at First Midwest Bank and opened a Money Market at MB Financial.
- Statistics for the month of February 2017:
  - 1,920 Bus Rides; 898 Dial-A-Ride; 1,022 Medical Van Rides
  - 1,036 Meals Delivered
  - 73 In-house Visits to the Nurse
  - 41 Home Visits by the Nurse
  - 425 Visits to the Food Pantry – 985 people fed
  - 31 LIHEAP Applications processed
  - 14 Mobile Dental Clinic applications processed

## **NEW BUSINESS**

### **MOTION #5: ADOPT ANNUAL TOWN MEETING AGENDA**

Motion by Trustee Domrzalski, seconded by Trustee O'Connell, to adopt annual Town Meeting Agenda.

ROLL CALL VOTE: AYES: Domrzalski, O'Connell, Schultz, Hoban, Penner  
NAYS: None....Motion #5 Carried.

### **MOTION # 6: SENIOR CELEBRATION DAY RESOLUTION 2017-01**

Motion by Trustee O'Connell, seconded by Trustee Domrzalski to approve Senior Celebration Day Resolution June 9, 2017 2017-01.

ROLL CALL VOTE: AYES: O'Connell, Domrzalski, Schultz, Hoban, Penner  
NAYS: None....Motion # 6 Carried.

## **OLD BUSINESS**

Budget discussions were held starting with the General Assistance ("GA") budget. Trustee Hoban asked why the Emergency Assistance expenditures were only \$54,000 yet we are proposing a budget of some \$90,000. GA Director Villarreal responded that the income level for eligibility was raised because the denial rate for over-income clients had risen to more than 36%. The income guideline was raised from 150% to 200% above the poverty level, or from about \$1,485 per month to approximately \$1,800-\$1,900 per month. The increase complies with income restrictions presently used for

the Mobile Dental Clinic and other social service programs administered by the Township. Emergency Assistance, not to be confused with the Emergency Angel Fund, is limited to a yearly one time use. Emergency Assistance is optional by statute, but Wheeling Township has chosen to provide this service. Mrs. Villarreal added that General Assistance is required by State law and if GA funds run out, GA will have to borrow from Town Fund. She stated that we never know how many residents will walk through the door needing services, and if there is a catastrophic event, GA must have available funds.

Trustee Hoban asked about the Access to Care program that provides health services to persons, including undocumented persons. Mrs. Villarreal responded that by contract, Township funds cannot be used by Access to Care for undocumented persons. Township funding may only be used for legal residents. In response to Trustee Hoban's question if there is auditing of the use of funds, Mrs. Villarreal responded that Access to Care has many sources of funding and auditing of Access to Care is not a function performed by General Assistance. Administrator Stellato stated there has not been any evidence of misuse of Township funds.

Township funding of social service agencies was discussed next. The Board had previously discussed reducing funding to Clearbrook and Omni and Supervisor Penner also wanted to discuss reducing funding to Little City because these agencies paid their executives very high six figure salaries. Trustee Domrzalski suggested perhaps reducing Little City by \$5,000 of proposed \$29,000 to get their attention about Board's concerns. Trustee Hoban raised a concern that the proposed 2017-18 budget was some \$2.7 million yet the levy raised was only \$1.9 million. This would mean there would be a reduction from the reserve of some \$830,000. Trustee Hoban suggested that the Board needed to look at reducing funding to agencies by 25%, a decrease of about \$527,423. Administrator Stellato stated the deficit was planned. The Township reserves were almost 2 times the budget and for a number of years the Board had worked to reduce those reserves by reducing the levies. The \$800,000 deficit was planned so the reserves could be reduced to comply with the law. In fact, the entire budget for the Township is lower than last year's budget. Over the last 5 years, the budget has been relatively flat. Trustee Hoban indicated that if the same deficit would be run for seven years, the deficits would burn through reserves. Supervisor Penner responded that Trustee Hoban had never raised any of these issues and had voted for the plan to reduce the reserves for the last three years. Trustee Hoban disagreed insisting he had spoken of reducing agency funding. Supervisor Penner responded that Trustee Hoban had never raised any such issue, voted for the budgets and supported cutting the levies 30% as part of the plan. Supervisor Penner added that Trustee Hoban had not raised a single question when Highway Commissioner Saewert exceeded his budget by \$120,000 requiring the board to re-open the budget for the unexpected spending. In fact, Supervisor Penner stated that Trustee Hoban tried to defend Commissioner Saewert. Yet Trustee Hoban questioned a 25 cent raise for a Township bus driver while ignoring tens of thousands of unexplained last minute spending by the Highway Commissioner. Supervisor Penner stated that the Board did not get any prior information about the overspending and did not expect such

overspending by the Highway Commissioner. Trustee Hoban replied that the Commissioner advanced certain projects and that led to the overspending. Trustee Hoban added that the Commissioner provided monthly reports. Trustee O'Connell stated that the overspending by the Highway Commissioner had put the Board in a difficult position because if the Board did not approve the overspending then the Commissioner could sue the Board. The vendors completed the work and deserved to be paid. The Commissioner had said he would take the Board to court. Trustee Hoban responded that the Board still was not required to approve the extra spending. Trustee O'Connell replied that Northfield Highway Commissioner sued and won when his Board did not approve the Road budget. The cost of a legal defense would be expensive and absent of fraud or wrong doing by the Commissioner, winning the case would be hard. Over \$100,000 in excess spending indicated the Board did not have a handle or control over the Highway Commissioner. Trustee O'Connell stated that a project would have to be done in two phases this year because of lack of funds and that roads are being taken care of. Mr. May can bring any issues to the Board. Trustee Hoban stated there were complaints from unincorporated residents about snow plowing. Administrator Stellato responded that she was aware of only two calls from over one thousand residents in the unincorporated area.

Trustee Domrzalski asked about \$20,000 in the budget for other mental health services. Administrator Stellato included the funds in the budget in case they were needed when Salvation Army ceases counseling services in June. Trustee Domrzalski agreed to keep it in the budget in case it was needed, but asked that any unused portion go back to the budget to pay for other costs. All concurred. Administrator Stellato prorated roughly for the Salvation Army for the rest of their tenure. Previously the Salvation received about \$70,000 for the year so the prorated amount through June would be \$24,000. Trustee Domrzalski suggested \$15,000 reductions in funding compared to the prior year funding for Clearbrook and Omni. Trustee O'Connell expressed concern that these reductions intended to send a message that these agencies are paying their executives too much will impact the people they serve. The Trustees wanted to know what the former executive, now consultant, is earning before making a final decision about Clearbrook. Trustee Schultz also raised a concern that heroin addiction was on the rise and perhaps funding Behavioral Health more would make sense. Trustee Domrzalski indicated that 60% of the populace is predisposed to addiction by genetics and would like to know how many Township residents Behavioral Health helps with addiction. The Board discussed what to give agencies and Board agreed to \$109,000 for Omni. Trustee Hoban indicated that two Committee members supported reduction to \$75,000, but the Board favored \$109,000 compared to the previous year funding of \$124,000. The Township in a letter would indicate concerns with the salaries for the highest executives.

The rest of the Town Fund was discussed next. Trustee Hoban indicated that rather than \$60,000 for lease and new vehicle, the township should consider vouchers for a taxi service. Administrator Stellato indicated that she compared our transportation service with other Townships. Taxi costs could be costly. The Township currently leases buses from PACE for \$100 per month. The bus or vehicles the Township owns

cover routes not necessarily covered by the PACE buses. Trustee Schultz stated that she worked with seniors for years and seniors are not comfortable with taxis and feel safer with a bus. Administrator Stellato indicated the Township could possibly do a survey of seniors to get more information. Also, she stated that everyone needs to remember that many seniors need lift and other handicapped accessible rides. About 60-65% of the seniors need the lift capacity that a taxi cannot accommodate. PACE also has specific routes so the Township supplements the PACE routes with Township vehicles. Trustee Hoban asked how many miles the bus being replaced had and the response was that it could be 150,000 to 200,000 miles.

Trustee Hoban indicated that the federal government had capped salary increases at 2.1% and he also wanted to cap any salaries of those over \$100,000. Trustee Hoban noted that the Supervisor in DeKalb when going to another job reduced his salary 75%. He added that the Township Supervisor makes some \$30,000 whereas mayors of Arlington Heights and Mount Prospect make some \$8,000. Administrator Stellato indicated that the DeKalb County Supervisor took a position that paid three times as much and kept the Supervisor's position at DeKalb until the term ended.

In regards to Road District fund, Trustee Hoban asked the Board to explore an intergovernmental agreement with Northfield Township for snow removal. Administrator Stellato indicated that snow removal will go out to bid including bids by local municipalities. She added that the Township had a quote from Buffalo Grove. Supervisor Penner inquired why Commissioner Saewert failed to sign a contract for snow removal for the entire season rather than only to December 31, 2016. He forced the Township to seek last minute bids. Trustee O'Connell indicated that the Township can go out to bid earlier this year and Northfield Township can bid. Northfield Township was unhappy with Wheeling Township for questioning a \$10,000 increase after an agreement for snow removal was allegedly made. Scott Saewert signed with Peter Amaratos from Northfield Township a contract for \$25,000 for snow removal and then pulled the contract because the bid changed to \$35,000. This year the Township will seek bids for the snow removal contract and Northfield will have the same opportunity as everyone else to bid so there is nothing left to argue about. Attorney Metz stated that the Township can seek bids and if an intergovernmental agreement is reached for less cost, the Township can reject all bids. Trustee Hoban still wanted an intergovernmental agreement considered. Trustee Domrzalski stated that Scott Saewert stated projects were done. The Board and Administrator were surprised that the remainder of the Lee-Morrison project would cost \$500,000. The project will have to be done in two phases.

Administrator Stellato stated what the next snow removal contract will look like is uncertain, but hopes that in the future it will be paid monthly. Anything after February 28 will be in next fiscal year. Trustee O'Connell then added that this is a very well run Township and very conservative about spending. She stated that we have never had a problem in my 16 years about who said what. She stated that Trustee Hoban constant picking at everything in the last few meetings when the Township has done a darned good job is wrong. Fred May said we should look at Hanover Township, but he has no



idea what is going on there. Trustee O'Connell stated we are a premier Township with clear transparency that others try to copy. We have a model bus program and the seniors could not stop raving about it. Trustee Hoban stated we had a great Road District. Trustee O'Connell replied that we still have a great Road District. The same five or six people complaining does not change the fact that services are provided well. She added that the Administrator and the Supervisor are always looking for ways to reduce costs and improve services. Trustee Hoban stated that when he sees an overall budget deficit of some \$800,000, the Board needs to consider the long-term future impact. Trustee O'Connell replied she would cut Agency funding if that ever was an issue and keep in-house programs. Administrator Stellato stated she is getting mixed messages from Trustee Hoban. For the last number of years she's heard that the Township needed to reduce reserves to avoid being sued, but now Trustee Hoban is voicing concerns about reducing reserves and deficit spending. Supervisor Penner reiterated that on Election day, 70% voted to eliminate the Road District because residents were asking why they are paying \$500,000 to support an area that contributes \$5,000 and these residents still have to pay their own municipalities for road service. Trustee Hoban stated that after the referendum, the Township still has to pay for the Road maintenance and it is wrong to pit residents against each other. Supervisor Penner responded that 70% of the voters decided to remove a layer of bureaucracy and it is time to let it go. Administrator Stellato stated that the misinformation is stunning like the two residents from unincorporated area that spoke tonight. The Road Commissioner issue is done; Trustee Hoban agreed the issue is done. Supervisor Penner feels there is more transparency now with the Highway Department is being run by the Board and Trustee Hoban disagreed.

Administrator Stellato indicated that final budget will be adopted in May, but the Board needs to approve a tentative budget tonight.

**MOTION # 7: APPROVAL 2017-18 TENTATIVE TOWN AND GENERAL ASSISTANCE BUDGETS**

Motion by Supervisor Penner, seconded by Trustee O'Connell, to approve 2017-18 Tentative Town and General Assistance Budgets as discussed.

ROLL CALL VOTE: AYES: Penner, Schultz, O'Connell, Domrzalski  
NAYS: Hoban....Motion # 7 Carried.

**MOTION # 8: APPROVAL OF 2017-18 TENTATIVE ROAD MAINTENANCE BUDGET**

Motion by Supervisor Penner, seconded by Trustee Schultz, to approve the 2017-18 Tentative Road Maintenance Budget as discussed.

WHEELING TOWNSHIP MINUTES OF REGULAR MEETING MARCH 28, 2017

ROLL CALL VOTE: AYES: Penner, Schultz, O'Connell  
NAYS: Hoban, Domrzalski ....Motion # 8 Carried

**MOTION #9: ADJOURNMENT**

Motion by Trustee O'Connell, seconded by Trustee Schultz, to adjourn.

VOICE CALL VOTE: All Ayes....Motion #9 Carried.

The meeting for Tuesday, March 28, 2017, was declared adjourned at 9:45 p.m. The next regular scheduled board meeting is set for Tuesday, April 25, 2017, at 8:00 p.m.

Joanna M. Gauza  
Wheeling Township Clerk