

COLLINSVILLE TOWNSHIP BOARD
SPECIAL BUDGET HEARING MINUTES

AUGUST 23, 2019 12:30 P.M.

OPENING

The special budget hearing of the Board of Trustees was held on the above date at the Collinsville Senior Center, 420 East Main Street, Collinsville, Illinois. The meeting was called to order by Supervisor Terry Allan at 12:30 p.m.

PRESENT

Following the Pledge of Allegiance, roll call was taken with the following members present: Trustee Foley, Trustee Cox, Trustee Hopkins, and Supervisor Allan. Township Attorney Jack Daugherty, Clerk Cathy Allison, Township Assessor Pete Poletti and Accountant James Ferris were also present. Trustee Jim Stack and Road Commissioner Larry Trucano were absent. Trustee Hopkins noted that this meeting was scheduled before Trustee Stack was appointed to the board and that he is currently out of the country.

Also present were Eva Giovando, Bart Astrauskas, Clinton Ball, Kathy Hoelscher, Mary Drumm, Linda Bohnenstiehl, Mark Achenbach, M. Ramone Clark, Irene Wentzel, Carla Buckhannon, Al Woolen, Brandon Royer, and Scott Rayho.

PUBLIC COMMENTS

Clint Ball – Knows that things will not change much today with the budget. If it takes five years to train someone, you are doing it wrong. It might be better if you defended your position with actual year over year performance and data instead of your soapbox stories. None of your stories were supported with any data. Mr. Ball asked all the trustees if they were knowingly and purposely budgeting to spend solely to deplete the current surplus we have. Supervisor Allan was just lobbying the attendees to stay to help him vote for something today. Is there a public vote that you are expecting to happen today? Supervisor Allan said no.

Mary Drumm – Repeated that Assessor Poletti has said it takes five years to train someone. Assessor Poletti said yes it does. He has said before that this is a federal law. Ms. Drumm asked if he knew what the Illinois Department of Financial and Professional Regulation is? Assessor Poletti replied yes. He said it is a federal law for appraisers and he considers his employees appraisers. Ms. Drumm passed handouts to the trustees. No experience required, equivalent of a high school diploma, the mentor will co-sign all of the appraisal work for between 12 and 30 months. Five years is double the amount of time required by the professional regulations. Assessor Poletti doubles the assessment fee compared to Edwardsville and doubles the amount of time to train your employees. Regarding the budget, do not live beyond your means.

Mark Achenbach – Spoke at the last meeting about what the county charges for the assessments compared to Assessor Poletti's office. The trustees are responsible for approving the budget. Assessor Poletti asked for a number and Mr. Achenbach gave information that came from the county. He asked if anyone who is going to vote on this budget today, did you bother to check or do you just take Assessor Poletti's word. Trustee Foley said he did talk to the county assessor and he was told something completely different. Mr. Achenbach said the county assessor said that did not cover all the cost, such as counter work. Mr. Achenbach asked what the county assessor would charge. The county assessor explained that when they set the rates for the assessment portion that was as a result of a three month time and motion study. There are ten townships that are currently using the county to

do their assessments. The county assessor said the very small townships cover that for free. Other townships have a person who remains in the office that provides the counter services. That is the model. What does this mean for Assessor Poletti's budget? If Collinsville Township would retain one person to work in the office to just provide customer service, it would cost us roughly \$200,000 to the county and the cost for one single employee who would always be in the office. This would be something less than \$300,000. If you vote for a budget more than that for the assessor's office, he questions whether any of the trustees really care who they work for. Taxpayers ask that the job be done efficiently.

Phil Astrauskas – Can't see why if there is an extra \$100,000 allowed for new hires, why can't this be lower. He was in the assessor's office and notice there was a new hire and also that no males are employed there or in the township office. Spoke about the increase in assessments on his properties. He asked how they came up with these assessments and was told it was by surrounding sales in the neighborhood.

PUBLIC HEARING ON THE TENTATIVE BUDGET AND APPROPRIATION ORDINANCES FOR COLLINSVILLE TOWNSHIP TOWN FUND, GENERAL ASSISTANCE AND ROAD DISTRICT FOR 2019/2020.

Mr. James Ferris said he spoke on the budget before and nothing has changed. Trustee Cox said it was his understanding that we will be voting on the budget at the next meeting and that we will be discussing it as well. Attorney Daugherty said the opportunity to talk about the budget details are now. Trustee Foley did not think that any questions needed to be answered. Mr. Ferris has been through this several times. Enough is enough. Trustee Cox said he thinks we understand the basic numbers. He does not understand how \$40,000 can come out of general assistance to help pay for an entrance way for the assessor's office. General assistance is for the poor people. Trustee Hopkins said the general assistance office is part of the township office space. They paid a proportionate amount for the improvements. It was equally divided between assessor's budget, general assistance's budget and the town fund. Trustee Cox is not okay with that. He doesn't understand why it wasn't taken out of the general fund. There is a difference in what the law states and what is right. Trustee Hopkins said the supervisor is the treasurer. The treasurer decides what funds bills are paid out of and the trustees approve the bills. The bills have already been paid. Trustee Cox wants to amend the line items in the budget. Trustee Foley asked to make a point of order. He takes exception with Trustee Cox saying general assistance is for only poor people. There are others (i.e. middle income, senior citizens, laid off workers) that also need assistance. Trustee Hopkins said that the assessor works for the voters and he will trust his judgement until someone can show him something better that their customer service won't suffer. Property owners in Edwardsville can go to the assessor's office because it is right in their backyard. If we eliminate our assessor's office, our citizens will have to go to Edwardsville. We do not want to make them do that. Our assessor's office sends out notices and calls our senior citizens. They appreciate the fact that they have the office right down the street from the senior center. Trustee Cox said we are a million dollars unbalanced. That is reckless. That will cause property taxes to increase. Starting with general assistance, he believes \$40,000 should be transferred. It's going from one to the other. There is also \$37,000 on top of what was spent last year on administration. It used to be 80% of the money went to administration. Why would we go the opposite way? This is \$37,000 to budget what we spent last year on administration. Regarding the assessor, not every person has to be a certified appraiser. We don't have to have seven or eight people in the office when Edwardsville has two. We want to do a good job and give our taxpayers the best bang for their buck. We could save \$144,000 if we spend the same as last year. General administration \$67,000 more than last year. Why are we wanting to overspend? We have \$200,000 in contingencies. Trustee Cox asked Mr. Ferris if that meant we could spend that on anything. Mr. Ferris said that is money set aside for the extra payment for IMRF. Trustee Cox asked why it was not under the IMRF portion. Mr. Ferris said last year we did not spend any. In 2017 and 2018 we did. Trustee Hopkins asked how much was spent overall. Mr. Ferris said the budget amount for everything is \$2,269,710. We spent approximately \$1,600,000. Trustee Cox said why don't we budget \$50,000,000 and then next year we can say we did a good job. That is not how it works. On page 3 under administration, general fund, contingencies \$200,000. Last

year we spent zero. Mr. Ferris said we did not pay the extra \$200,000 to IMRF. In 2017 and 2018 we did. Trustee Cox said this year we are budgeting to send to IMRF \$70,000. Mr. Ferris said that is for the employees. The \$200,000 is an extra payment to IMRF for funding levels to tax the amount for IMRF down. Trustee Cox asked how much does the township owe right now. Mr. Ferris did not know and wasn't sure if IMRF could give an exact amount. IMRF is over drawn basically. Trustee Cox said we are putting \$69,938. Why on the whole other account, not even in IMRF, is the \$200,000 there. Nobody budgets this way. Mr. Ferris said it really isn't a true IMRF disbursement for specific workers. What you are talking about is money that is paid to the IMRF for specific workers. The \$200,000 is an amount in addition to that that goes into the fund that is restricted for Collinsville Township. Mr. Ferris questioned whether they were sure that it is only going to benefit Collinsville Township retirees. You do not want to pay in and then Chicago gets part of it or Bloomington or Carrollton. They said no. If you pay an extra amount, which a lot of small townships do because it helps with their rates. Their rates will go down unlike social security and Medicare. It saves money in the end. Trustee Cox asked if there was a reason it was in the general fund and not IMRF. Mr. Ferris could not say for sure. But if we want him to change it, he will. Trustee Hopkins said that is a separate disbursement to increase our funding level. That is a separate amount. IMRF line item is for the salaries. IMRF contributions depending on your funding level. Road and Bridge Office Manager Kathy Hoelscher said it is currently 4.5%. Trustee Hopkins said depending on the funding level, that is where they set it. The employee pays that 4% and the township pays 4%. By being more funded the IMRF line item is for the employees when they get their paycheck. The other line item is to increase the funding levels with IMRF with our actuarial assumption for our pension. Trustee Cox asked if there was a possibility that the \$200,000 in the general fund under contingencies could go for something else. Trustee Hopkins said if the board votes for it. That is where Trustee Cox has an issue. By putting it under contingencies, it can be spent on something other than IMRF. He would like to put it under IMRF. Mr. Ferris said you can call it contingency restricted for IMRF additional payment. He will do whatever the board wants. Motion was made by Trustee Cox to vote on budget by separate funds. No second was made. Motion failed. Trustee Cox believes voting on a budget and spending nearly double of what we are bringing in is not serving the citizens. Trustee Hopkins said last year we budgeted 36% more than we spent. We are only going to spend what this board approves. We are not going to spend more than we take in. Trustee Cox does not understand why we would not want to put it in the IMRF. Trustee Hopkins said it would not be allocated for their paychecks. It is a separate purpose. You cannot take money out of the IMRF line item and send it unless it is coming out of someone's paycheck. This is a separate payment from the town fund.

ADJOURN

There being no further business to come before the board, Supervisor Allan asked for a motion to adjourn. Motion made by Trustee Foley and seconded by Trustee Hopkins to adjourn the meeting. Roll call found the vote unanimous on the motion. Motion passed. Time 1:20 p.m.

Terry Allan, Township Supervisor

Cathy Allison, Township Clerk