

**COLLINSVILLE TOWNSHIP**  
**PUBLIC HEARING ON TOWN FUND BUDGET AND APPROPRIATION ORDINANCE**  
**JUNE 16, 2020          6:45 P.M.**

**OPENING**

The Town Fund Public Hearing and was held on the above date by audio conferencing. The meeting was called to order by Township Supervisor Daniel Hopkins at 6:45 p.m.

**PRESENT**

Pledge of Allegiance was suspended due to format during COVID-19 pandemic. Roll call was taken with the following members participating by audio: Trustee Mike Foley, Trustee Derrick Cox, Trustee Robert Milam and Supervisor Daniel Hopkins. Clerk Cathy Allison, Road Commissioner Larry Trucano and Attorney Justin Mattea also participated by audio. Trustee James Stack was absent. Trustee Cox said if you are going to do roll call you have to at least do roll call of trustees. You can't just skip somebody because they don't want to call in. It has to be on record. Supervisor Hopkins asked who he was talking about. Trustee Cox said she didn't even call Jim Stack. Supervisor Hopkins said Jim Stack is ill tonight. He said it before the first meeting that he was not going to be attending any of our meetings tonight. Trustee Cox said you have to do roll call. Supervisor Hopkins asked the clerk to call for Jim Stack to see if he replies.

Others participating by audio were Kathy Hoelscher, Clint Ball, Stephanie Malench and Scott Rayho.

**PUBLIC HEARING ON TENTATIVE TOWN FUND BUDGET AND APPROPRIATION ORDINANCE FOR 2020/2021.**

**1. Public Comments**

**Clint Ball** – He knows we live in the state of Illinois, but we don't have to act like our state government and budget this Township in a deficit year after year. It is disgraceful. You don't do it in your own home. The community is tired of it. It is time to take some responsibility and budget to your revenues and make the necessary cuts where the necessary cuts need to be made. Specifically, the assessor's office. He knows nothing that he says will change the majority's vote tonight, but he just wanted to let the board know that the community is very disappointed with the majority of this board.

2. **Board Discussion** – Trustee Foley thinks the budget is very much in line with what we done. He does not know what Mr. Ball is talking about. He has talked to many people and they like what we are doing. They don't think anything is out of line. Trustee Cox would like to know why Trustee Foley and Trustee Milam are going to vote for this. We are budgeting to spend two times as much as we bring in. Trust Foley asked how Trustee Cox figure it to be two times of what it was. Trustee Cox asked Trustee Foley if he knew what our revenue was for the town budget. Trustee Cox said it was approximately \$1,100,000. This is not personal. Trust Foley's comment to Mr. Ball was very personal. He deserves his opinion to be heard.

Trustee Foley said close to \$1,100,000. Trustee Cox asked what is our budget this year for the town fund. He asked Trustee Foley if he would agree that it is approximately \$2,200,000. Trustee Foley said that is what's down on paper. Trustee Cox asked if he now understands we are bringing in \$1,100,000 but we are budgeting to spend \$2,200,000. Last meeting Trustee Cox made a motion to prepare a balanced budget. He could not get a second. He asked Trustee Foley if that was true. Trustee Foley said no. Trustee Cox asked if Trustee Milam agreed. Trustee Milam said he agreed. Trustee Cox doesn't agree with budgeting to spend double the amount that we bring in. He said Mr. Ball is correct. There are a lot of people in this state that are fed up. With the pandemic, everybody is having to cut back. We at the Township, no, not at all. He knows that anything he says, it's not going to change the vote. Trustee Cox asked Trustee Foley if he would consider my argument. Trustee Foley said no. It is not the truth. Trustee Cox asked what was not the truth. Trustee Foley said if we didn't raise our levy, how can it go up by what you are saying it went up. Trustee Cox said there is a difference in levy and budget. Trustee Foley understands that. Trustee Cox said we didn't raise our levy. Trustee Foley said we are going to get in trouble for not doing that sooner or later down the road. Trustee Cox said we agree on that. If we spend double the amount that we are bringing in, we budget and we spend double the amount or more than what we brought in that's an unbalanced. Trustee Milam said we don't spend double. That is a lie. Trustee Cox said his point is that we haven't raised tax levy or the taxes on the citizens since he has been on the board and we had a huge surplus and we have been spending that down. Just because somebody has a surplus, doesn't mean go out and blow it all. His point is, when we vote today to accept or reject the budget, that is giving authorization for them to spend up to \$2,200,000. He doesn't believe that's the way our citizens want their representatives in the township to behave. That is his opinion. Supervisor Hopkins said the budget is not unbalanced. It's unbalanced on revenues, but we actually have surpluses. He asked Trustee Cox which programs he would like the board to cut if he wants us to only budget for what the levy is. You keep saying that you want to help people. Everything we do in the town office is help people. We do General Assistance (GA). We help kids with backpack and summer lunch programs. We help the food pantry, the reading program, and community organizations. If it were an unbalanced budget, we wouldn't have the funds to support the budget. We have the funds. They are surplus funds. We haven't raised the levy. The first levy we did, Trustee Cox voted no against lowering the levy. Trustee Cox said you know why. Trustee Cox said you can say we help people but is helping somebody paying more than half of the, or half. In prior years its been 70% to administrative cost. In General Assistance our administration costs are more than what we actually help people. Supervisor Hopkins said the GA is required by law to screen everybody. Just because we don't help somebody, doesn't mean the GA didn't do anything. They take an application from a lot of people. After they get all the information and they realize that they don't qualify. Then they try to find them other avenues and other resources. We give them referrals and put them in contact with people who can help them. Just because we are not giving out funds to people because they do not meet the criteria put down by the state and federal guidelines for general assistance, does not mean that general assistance is not doing anything. Trustee Cox said a lot of politicians, not just Collinsville Township, always tell people they are helping them. Trustee Cox said we do not give out \$2,200,000 in aid. We are using that to pass this budget. How is buying a new entry way helping people when that came out of General Assistance. Supervisor Hopkins said their offices are part of this building. When we reopen the

office, that entry way we put in right now lets us keep serving the public through the window that is going to protect our employees from people who may be infected with Covid or other illnesses. Trustee Cox said he was talking about last year when we spent \$40,000 out of General Assistance to actually go to the entrance way. Trustee Cox asked Supervisor Hopkins is saying that the township could do the services for any less. Other townships do, like Edwardsville. Their assessor's office runs with two people in the office. Supervisor Hopkins said he is not going to tell the assessor how to run his office. If we defund the assessor, he could sue us and they would win. Trustee Cox said we are voting on the budget and not even considering any type of decrease. Whatever amount the assessor ask for we just have to pass it. He had made a motion for a balanced budget and couldn't get a second. He also feels it is illegal to vote during a public hearing. Trustee Milam asked where in the assessor's office does Trustee Cox want to cut. Trustee Cox said we have a bloated amount of people inside the assessor's office. He would like to cut some of the employees. Especially during Covid. The office hasn't been open for a third of the year. Trustee Milam asked him how many. Trustee Cox said start with three of them. We have had a long debate on how we could do it with less money. Trustee Milam asked if he was going to cut the top three, bottom three or middle three. Trustee Cox said let the assessor decide. Trustee Milam asked if Trustee Cox agrees that Edwardsville pays higher taxes than we do. Trustee Cox said no, they are lower. Trustee Foley said that was wrong. Their city and township taxes are higher. Trustee Milam asked if Trustee Cox was saying that the assessor sets the assessed evaluation. Trustee Cox said that he did not know what their multiplier was this year but ours, every single taxpayer in Collinsville, whatever their white card said, you can add three percent to that. Trustee Milam said people in Edwardsville obviously assess their homes at a greater value than the people in Collinsville. Trustee Milam is for lower taxes. They must be for higher taxes. People in Edwardsville that don't have nicer houses are paying more taxes than people in Collinsville because their assessed evaluation is higher. So obviously Mr. Poletti is doing a good job. Trustee Cox said if the assessor comes to my house and he assesses it at \$100,000. It is actually worth \$150,000. Then he assesses my neighbors for \$200,000. What happens is it is called a multiplier and what they do is they look at the houses assessed and then they look at the houses sold. And they decide what kind of job he is doing. Then at the end of the year they either add a percent or two or take away for houses sold to actually what it was assessed at. Our multiplier was 3% off last year. Trustee Cox ask Trustee Milam if he was saying he should go out and assess everything at \$5.00 and nobody has to pay taxes. Trustee Cox said he was 3% off. So, no matter what, when the county asks for their portion, the state ask for their portion and the township asked for their portion we have to add 3% because of the poor job that he did last year. Trustee Milam asked how far Edwardsville was off. Trustee Cox believes it was like 2% this year. Trustee Milam said so he was within 1% of Edwardsville. Trustee Cox said they spent half of what we did. Trustee Cox said he would like to cut out the assessor's budget. Trustee Milam just wanted to make sure that Trustee Cox was for cutting jobs and getting rid of people in the assessor's office. Trustee Cox is for three people that are in training for five years. Trustee Cox is for saving taxpayers money on the assessor's office. Trustee Milam said no, you are for cutting jobs. Trustee Cox said he is for cutting three people out of the assessor's office. Supervisor Hopkins asked how he came up with three. Trustee Cox said he wants to get it down to where Edwardsville is at. Trustee Foley said they do not do the same thing as the Collinsville office. Trustee Cox asked how many people did they use in the Edwardsville office. Trustee Foley said they use

others like students. Those students can't be in that office and know what they are doing without being trained. That is a very complicated issue. Trustee Cox said they hire help in the summer to go out and take pictures. It saves taxpayers money. Trustee Foley said a picture doesn't state what the evaluation of the house is. You have to look at the house and sometimes go into the house. Trustee Cox does not think it is fair to spend double the amount of Edwardsville. Trustee Milam asked what other cuts Trustee Cox would like to make. How many would he like to cut out of the General Assistance or the Township office. Trustee Cox said don't ask him where he would like to cut or put him in a hole. That is the Supervisor's job. He is the one who prepares the budget. Trustee Milam said the only way you are saying to cut the budget is to get rid of people. Trustee Cox asked if Trustee Milam had seconded his motion to prepare a balanced budget. Trustee Milam said no, he did not. Trustee Cox said so you are not for a balanced budget. Supervisor Hopkins said this is a balance budget. It is balanced with revenues and surplus. And funds that we have not spent in past years. We did not spend \$535,000 that was budgeted for last year. Nothing says we are going to spend every dime. Even the Township code says, "you shall budget liberally and spend frugally". To say it is not a balanced budget is very false. And everything we do up here is helping the public. The assessor's office budget is within ours. His budget of that \$2,200,000 is \$477,000.

### **ACTION ITEMS**

**Vote to adopt and approve budget and appropriation ordinance for Collinsville Township Town Fund for 2020/2021 (Ordinance No. 2020-03)** - Supervisor Hopkins asked to entertain a motion to pass and approve the budget appropriation ordinance for Collinsville Township Town Fund for 2020/2021, Ordinance No. 2020-03. Trustee Cox asked Attorney Mattea if it was legal for us to vote during a public hearing portion. Attorney Mattea said it is his understanding that the Road and Bridge should be voted, which we did, and that the Town Fund may, which we are. But it looks like the agenda has them in both, so he thinks it is appropriate to just vote in both. Trustee Cox asked why we were having the next meeting. Attorney Mattea said he thinks we should just follow through with the agenda. Trustee Milam made the motion. Seconded by Trustee Foley. Roll call found the vote three ayes and one nay. Motion passed. Trustee Cox was the nay vote.

### **ADJOURN**

Supervisor Hopkins asked for a motion to adjourn the Town Fund Public Hearing and vote. Motion made by Trustee Foley and seconded by Trustee Milam. Roll call found the vote unanimous. Motion passed. Time 7:30 p.m.

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Daniel R Hopkins, Township Supervisor

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Cathy Allison, Township Clerk