

Hanover Township Advisory Board Meeting

Wednesday, August 9, 2023

Meeting of the Hanover Township Advisory Board was called to order at 6:02 p.m. followed by the Pledge of Allegiance recited by all in attendance and a prayer from Charlie Kortokrax.

Roll call as follows: Board members present were Richard Niemeyer, President; Charlie Kortokrax, Vice President; and, Marilyn Kaper, Secretary. A quorum was established.

Also in attendance were Kevin Toth, Trustee; Terri and Beth, office staff; as well as Kathy Broomhead, public attendee.

It was moved by Marilyn and seconded by Charlie that the minutes from the previous meeting of July 12, 2023 be approved as presented. The vote in favor was unanimous.

Under Old Business the Fire Levy Increase was next item of the agenda. Discussion followed based on Budget Form 4-B provided by the Trustees Office on Budget Estimate Financial Statement – Proposed Tax Rate for year 2024 – TOWNSHIP FIRE AND E.M.S. Year 2023 Fire Funds were separated and year 2024 the State is requiring that said funds be combined. A proposed property tax levy based on the current levy and approving 100% of the increase, the budget year total revenue would be \$305,288.00. Approving only 50% of the increase, the budget year total revenue would be \$229,788.00. The Trustee's office has never had a Fire Operating Fund because they were receiving such a small levy. This levy increase would allow the Trustees Office to begin the Operating Fund with approximately, \$114,481 with 100% levy increase. Or, \$38,981 approving only 50% levy increase. The DLGF recommends an operating fund to help fund contracts exceeding our budget. To pay the contracts funds were withdrawn from Cumulative Fire Fund as well as LOIT money and all other funds available. All monies came and went to provide Fire services. The contract with the Town of Cedar Lake is \$160,000.00 per year. Kevin is currently talking with St. John to pick up services to 109th Avenue. Kevin is hoping to negotiate a agreement with St. John of \$40,000.00 as the Township would not be able to afford more. Nothing has been approved. Charlie mentioned that meetings he has sat in, there were funds needed for reconditioning the pumper at about \$400,000.00. Where the

purse is, there will always be someone asking for money. The HT residents do not have the same response time that Cedar Lake has. Keep in mind the taxpayers of the Township residents. Contracts will take around \$200,000.00 leaving approximately \$17,000.

After much discussion, Charlie moved to approve the 50% tax levy increase. Terri asked that we pay attention to the advertise amount presented. Richard seconded the motion. The vote was approved.

Fire Contract discussion was next item of the agenda. As it was mentioned above there have been open discussions with St. John. Chief Wilkening is aware that talks have begun with St. John taking over specific covered areas. Chief Wilkening appears to be good with said conversation. Marilyn said that Chief Wilkening should be asking for additional funding from Paul Bremmer, Crown Point Trustee as well as Alice Dahl, Trustee from Lowell. It was mentioned that Chief has been there with no results.

Mentioned again was the fact that this Board is not interested in cutting the Town of Cedar Lake's contract of \$160,000.00. If an agreement between St. John and Cedar Lake comes to life, then the farthest distance away from Cedar Lake would not be serviced by Cedar Lake, thus the contract amount remains the same for less distance. The schools are the only exception to the contracts as everyone responds immediately.

Under New Business, Resolutions of the Operational Balance/Rainy Day was next item of the agenda. Trust Indiana Funds are fluid funds. DeMotte funds are in a checking account. The Trust Indiana for the Rainy Day Fund is \$154,401.30 and DeMotte's balance is \$40,340.77. The Cumulative Fund at Trust Indiana is \$209,098.66 and DeMotte's is \$105,943.02. No interest earned from the checking account at DeMotte State Bank. Richard asked how much is needed to operate on a monthly basis? Kevin mentioned that the funds in DeMotte are fluid as well. A little over \$10,000 of the interest earned is already in these numbers. Richard said that this Board will fund the operating balance every year. Marilyn said that it is important to have an operating balance that can sustain the township for the first 6 months of the year, until the draws are received. Money can be transferred from the operating fund into the Trust Indiana account and earn interest. Trust Indiana is a liquid account without penalty.

DRAFT Resolutions were discussed next. The Resolution regarding Rainy Day Fund had the previous Hanover Township Board on the letterhead; and, the amount

of Five Thousand Dollars \$5,000.00 should be changed to \$10,000.00 to keep in line with previous Board approved spending resolution of \$10,000.00. Once both adjustments are made, the Board can revisit the Resolutions next month.

The Resolution for the new Operating Balance Fund will only be used for Fire and EMS. Reminder that there is a budget to stay within. If something happens with the tax draws, there will be funds to pay the contracts already committed to.

2024 Budget is next on the agenda for discussion. Staff insurance was topic of conversation. Terri mentioned that she checked with the surrounding Townships about their health insurance rates. St. John's insurance company will not allow Terri to be added to their policy. The ITA is working on a pool so that all the Township employees could get health insurance collectively. It could be a better rate. Richard mentioned that Terri has always been fair with the cost of the health insurance. There is not anything glaring on the budget for 2024. The staff should be getting a 5% increase which is the same rate from surrounding areas.

Fire Department Radio Requests are next on the agenda. An email from Chief Wilkening is asking for VP8000 radios at \$4,732.99 each, plus the cost of the charger that equaled approximately \$5,100.00 each. The Chief asked for 10 radios. Question was asked if grant money is available for any of this product. Kevin said he knows that the cost is expensive. Richard asked where would even take the money from? Marilyn asked if they have 10 employees? Kevin said that when he started on a department the only person who had a radio was the officer on the rig. Now, everyone has one. Marilyn asked if this is a hand-held radio or one that attaches to their body? Plus a charger will be needed. Who will maintain them? Richard asked if these chargers have an inverter in them or do they require a 12 volt battery? Kevin said it would be a 12V. Richard mentioned that this is where Crown Point Trustee, Paul Bremmer and the Lowell Trustee, Alice Dahl could be a part of this. Charlie asked if the Chief has budgeted for this type of equipment. . This Board is asking if the Chief is acting on his own or with the authority of the Town Manager and/or Town Council for such an investment. Every day of the week the Cedar Lake is on mutual aid with Lake Dale. Cedar Lake provides staffing there. As a Board, we do not mind getting involved a little with this request. Marilyn moved to table this item on the agenda in an effort to get answers to questions, seconded by Charlie.

- 1: Does Chief Wilkening have the authority to ask for this request?
- 2: The Chief should also ask the other Trustees (Paul Bremmer & Alice Dahl) to purchase at least one radio each.

4: How many employees are at the Fire Station that would “need” 10 this year and 10 next year?

This Board is not in a position to fund “wants”. Before this decision can be made there are questions that need answers. This type of ask should be in the Fire Chiefs budget. This request is for \$50,000, which is a lot of money.

Unincorporated area - Township funds would be used for more of the Cedar Lake Town, Cedar Lake East side and Lowell. Charlie mentioned that this Board should concentrate on needs.

The Board charged Kevin, the Township Trustee to contact the Town Manager in writing asking said questions. Until answers are provided this item will continue to be tabled. This Board is responsible for managing the Hanover Township Funds. While the Township will most likely use some of these radio communications, the majority of the use will be within the Town of Cedar Lake and Lowell.

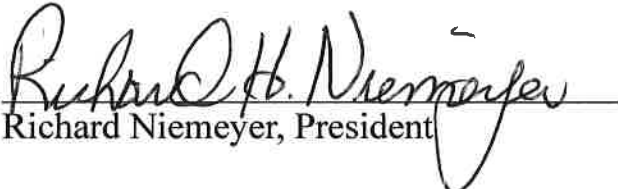
The vote in favor was unanimous to table the Radio purchase at this time.

Under any and all, Kevin mentioned that he received a document that recently annexed parcels OUT of Hanover Township.

Also, Kevin would like to finish paving the cemetery. It really looks very nice. Charlie also asked if there was a spray to get rid of the brush on the fencing. Kevin says he has a lot to do over there yet, but would like the weather to change a little. It was moved by Marilyn and seconded by Charlie that the paving be completed at the cemetery in the amount of approximately \$13,000. The vote in favor was unanimous.

There being no further business before the Board, it was moved by Charlie and seconded Marilyn that the meeting adjourn. The time being 7:37 p.m.

Respectfully submitted:


Richard Niemeyer, President



Charlie Kortokrax, Vice President



Marilyn Kaper, Secretary