

RECORD OF PROCEEDINGS

Minutes of

SHARON TOWNSHIP TRUSTEES

Meeting

GOVERNMENT FORMS & SUPPLIES 844-224-3338 FORM NO. 10148

REGULAR SESSION HELD AT

Held 95 E. Wilson Bridge Road January 25, 2023

Page 1 of 3

The meeting was called to order at 6:30 pm.

Roll Call:	Tony Palmer, Chair	Present
	John Oberle, Vice Chair	Present
	Laura Kunze, Trustee	Present
	Michael Farley, Fiscal Officer	Present

Attendance: Chief Tuchfarber, Supt. Tom Kayati, Robyn Stewart, Chief Zambito, Dan Guttman, Scott Bartter and Mayor of Riverlea

Pledge of Allegiance: The Pledge was led by Chair Palmer.

Special Meeting—Sharon Township Fire Levy Discussion

Chair Palmer explained the purpose of the special meeting and the desire to continue the dialogue. Palmer welcomed the residents to the meeting. He noted the two years plus of dialogue.

Oberle provided some background and a welcome to the City of Worthington. Oberle provided praise for the fire department and the services provided. Oberle noted that no decision has been made. Oberle explained that the contract has timing provisions. First there will be a negotiation period. Subsequently, an arbitration proceeding would occur. Oberle noted that discussions have been a partnership approach. Oberle noted that this was first put in the discussion in October of 2022—when it was on the City Council agenda.

Farley explained findings from the Franklin County Auditor’s Office. Farley explained that according to the Auditor’s Office, each mill will generate \$35 per \$100,000 of market value of the property.

Stewart provided opening statements with emphasis toward the long-term partnership. Stewart explained the request Worthington has made. Stewart referenced the provisions of the contract and how those provisions informed the request which is thirteen percent of the operating costs.

Resident asked a question about what the contract’s provisions are that lead to the number. Stewart provided the parameters of the contract that drive the calculation of the request (four factors).

Resident followed up to ask if the factors still make sense in calculating the shared cost. Stewart did not comment specifically but explained that the operative contract is current. Stewart noted that the contract could be negotiated.

Guttman explained that the factors are not weighted.

Resident asked if the City has a measure to calculate high users of the fire service based on high demand.

Stewart responded that it may be difficult to pull such users out of the calculation.

Oberle noted that the retirement community is part of the JEDD and they are paying income tax on the parcel.

Oberle discussed pending questions and summarized what he was hearing from the various parties. Oberle noted that he doesn’t want to recommend something that is perceived as forced. Oberle noted that this issue is likely to be the only matter on the ballot. Oberle recommends that at the February 1, 2023 meeting that the Township enter into negotiation process with the City of Worthington. Oberle noted that if the November ballot is pursued, the deadline is August.

Farley noted that funding from any passed millage would not be collected until January 2024.

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20

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Page 2 of 3

Resident asked about the millage calculation.

Stewart, Farley and Bartter explained the degradation of the existing millage.

Resident asked about the ballot of May in how it is paid.

Farley explained that the Township will be required to pay for it and that the cost may be larger because the Township would be the only issue on the ballot.

Resident asked about millage calculation. Farley explained the calculation.

Resident asked who votes. Farley affirmed that Township residents and Riverlea residents vote on the issue.

Resident asked what happens if it fails. Oberle explained the process of current discussion and that the Township cannot bind the City to a determination.

Resident asked if other terms could be discussed like allowing all Township residents to attend Worthington City Schools.

Palmer explained that schools cannot likely be included.

Resident asked what other terms could be negotiated.

Oberle explained that the other issues will be out of scope. If there is way to get additional partnerships, Oberle noted that possibility.

Kunze noted that she has discussed possibility of increasing signage recognizing the Township on fire vehicles.

Resident asked about the cost of the Community Center, and other services and talked about paying resident fees for those services.

Stewart noted that other property taxes outside of fire and cemetery—go to other jurisdictions. Stewart noted that she was open to further discussion but could not make a commitment.

Resident requested that the cost of the new tax per house be disclosed or a process of calculation. Stewart explained that the County Auditor will put forward a property tax calculator once the issue is certified. Farley concurred and provided example to the website.

Resident noted that the City of Worthington said that the cost of fire service has doubled and the City is asking for a “700 percent increase” in funding from the Township.

Chief Zambito noted that the purchasing of trucks is not included in the operating costs, but are necessary to operate the fire and EMS division.

Resident noted the low amount paid by residents in comparison to the services provided. Resident suggested a graphic representation to better demonstrate the inequity.

Resident noted that he had recently used the fire service. Resident noted that the Township residents’ costs for fire are very little. The resident provided assumptions of cost per house.

Resident asked if the Township is paying an equitable amount compared to City residents. Stewart noted that they calculated it for City residents and City residents are paying equivalent to about 8 to 9 mills.

Resident noted some ways that the information could be helpful for residents.

Resident asked about what happens if there is a delay.

Oberle noted that the process is governed by contract. Oberle noted it would go into a 45-day negotiation period and that the parties could enter into a mutually agreed extension. Oberle reiterated the need for transparency in the process.

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January 25, 2023
Page 3 of 3

Resident explained that further outreach is necessary.

Resident asked about what the 45-day period negotiation period entails. Oberle noted that if it goes past February 1, it will not be on the May ballot. Oberle explained that a robust negotiation would occur.

Resident asked about the various levy components. Farley explained the various levies. Palmer noted the difference in that the City is looking at dollar amount; where the Township is determining value in millage.

Resident questioned the communication. Palmer and Kunze both noted their efforts to get the word out about the meetings.

Resident questioned the effect of property values on growth. Farley and Barter explained the effect of HB 920 on freezing amount raised.

Stewart expressed appreciation for the continued dialogue and the ability to present the information. Noted that the next decision is in the Township's court.

Chief Tuchfarber noted the value of the relationship between the Sharon Township Police Department and the Worthington Fire Department.

Kayati expressed appreciation to the City for their work.

Oberle noted that the Trustees will discuss next steps at the meeting on Friday. This includes process steps.

Palmer expressed gratitude for the communications and feedback from the residents. Palmer stated that he is hearing strong support for Fire and EMS. Palmer noted that if this is the only ballot issue in May, it may cause confusion. Palmer expressed sensitivity in the cost of holding an election. Palmer noted that there could be a middle path that for long-term continuity.


Farley explained that something would have to be certified to the Auditor very quickly. Palmer explained that he wouldn't even be able to know how much to certify.

Kayati asked the City if it mattered whether the election was May or November. Stewart expressed understanding of the situation.

At 7:47pm Kunze moved to adjourn, Oberle seconded. Motion carried unanimously.

2/1/2023
Date


Chair


Fiscal Officer