

CHARTER TOWNSHIP OF WHITE LAKE
Draft Minutes of the Special Board of Trustees Meeting
February 13, 2023

Supervisor Kowall called the meeting to order at 5:30 p.m. He then led the Pledge of Allegiance.

Clerk Noble called the roll.

Present: Rik Kowall, Supervisor
 Anthony L. Noble, Clerk
 Mike Roman, Treasurer
 Scott Ruggles, Trustee
 Liz Smith, Trustee
 Andrea Voorheis, Trustee
 Michael Powell, Trustee

Also Present: Daniel T. Keller, Chief of Police
 Hannah Micallef, Recording Secretary

AGENDA

It was MOVED by Clerk Noble, SUPPORTED by Treasurer Roman, to approve the agenda, as presented. The motion PASSED by voice vote (7 yes votes).

PUBLIC COMMENT

No members of the public present.

NEW BUSINESS

A. POLICE DEPARTMENT RECRUITMENT UPDATE

Chief Keller thanked the Township Board for their presence this evening. He stated that there was a national officer shortage, and the shortage was trending country wide, not just in the Township. He said over the past 8 years, the officer shortage had gotten worse. Police departments have suffered due to the media attention that bad police officer actions and incidents received. The media did not reflect policing as a whole, it only highlighted the negativity. Chief Keller said the White Lake PD was the biggest “small town” police department in the state, and the community was appreciative of the department. He added that his department goes above and beyond for the residents, and he listed examples of the police department’s efforts, such as the fundraiser they came up with for the local grocery store clerk who was without a vehicle. He stated that the officers try to build “social capital” to build respect and trust among the residents. There were not enough police cadet recruits to fill open officer positions statewide.

Several officers and lieutenants would be eligible for retirement in the near future. The current social climate towards police officers was a driving factor towards retirement as of late. Officers weren't staying on past retirement as they had in the past. Twenty percent of the force would need to be rehired as of next year. As of present, the department was down 4 officers, and being short staffed was weighing on the officers. He said the negotiation process for the officers wasn't always a win/win situation, and not all issues that came up were contractual issues. The current contract would expire in 2025.

Chief Keller said the department had a recruitment team, and the department also went to the local schools, university career fairs, and police academies to recruit. An open house was scheduled for next week. Chief Keller said he sat on the local police academy board for interviews, and had been told that the Township did not pay enough for their officers. The hiring process within the Township was cumbersome. Slight updates had been done to the hiring process to reduce the total time a potential officer would spend. Increasing the salaries would incentivize new officers to join the force and stay on. His corrective action was to increase pay by \$7,000 annually, create a 4th and 5th step on the pay scale. 5-year top pay would be \$83,740. The annual cost of granting the increase was between \$210,000-\$220,000. There was \$5,000,000 in the fund balance, \$1,300,000 in the ARPA funds, and the Restore and Renew milage would garner \$280,000 per year.

It was MOVED by Supervisor Kowall, supported by Treasurer Roman, to defer the matter of police salary raises to the Township labor attorneys for a review and feasibility study, and the accounting department to get actuarial information. The motion PASSED by voice vote (7 yes votes).

B. ELECTED OFFICIAL SALARY DISCUSSION

The last time Township Officials received a base wage adjustment was in 2003. The Township trustees had a history of being the second highest paid in Oakland County. Supervisor Kowall said an increase in salaries would prompt quality candidates to serve the Township, and be fair in relation of the tasks that were required of elected officials now.

Treasurer Roman said he felt the elected officials making an appropriate salary, but would like to see the deputies' salaries increased.

Trustee Voorheis said she felt the Trustees were paid appropriately. Trustee Powell, Ruggles, and Smith agreed.

Supervisor Kowall suggested a study be done regarding the elected officials' salaries.

It was MOVED by Supervisor Kowall, supported by Treasurer Roman, to defer this study to the Township Attorney and HR for further review and a feasibility study. The motion PASSED by voice vote (6 yes votes) (1 no vote/Smith).

C. CIVIL ENGINEERING PROPOSALS DISCUSSION - CIVIC CENTER SITE

Treasurer Kowall said he spoke with Dan Redstone, and Dan suggested it would make sense for all of the civil engineering to be contracted. Option #1 would allow Beckett and Raeder to contract with the Township for civil engineering infrastructure, and then BRI would collaborate with Straub Pettit Yaste Architects and Redstone for the civil engineering of Township Hall and Public Safety buildings, respectively. Option #2 would allow Beckett and Raeder to produce one set of plans for site civil engineering, which would include Township Hall, the Public Safety Building, and infrastructure. This option would save around \$100,000. The Township has an established relationship with Beckett and Raeder.

It was MOVED by Clerk Noble, supported by Trustee Powell, to move forward with Option #2 with Beckett and Raeder producing one set of plans to include all civil engineering relating the future Township Hall, Public Safety Building, and infrastructure, pursuant to Township Attorney Lisa Hamameh’s review of the proposal and to allow Supervisor Kowall to sign the contract. The motion PASSED by voice vote (7 yes votes).

ADJOURNMENT

It was MOVED by Supervisor Kowall, supported by Treasurer Roman to adjourn at 7:42 p.m. The motion PASSED by voice vote (7 yes votes).

Rik Kowall, Supervisor
Charter Township of White Lake

Anthony L. Noble, Clerk
Charter Township of White Lake