

STATE OF ILLINOIS,)
 Lake County,) } SS.
 Town of Shields)

THE TOWN BOARD OF SHIELDS TOWNSHIP met at the Shields Township office for its regular monthly meeting on December 16, 2010 at 4:00 p.m.

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| PRESENT: <u>Gale Strenger Wayne</u> | Supervisor |
| <u>David Barkhausen</u> | Town Clerk |
| <u>Lynn Baehr</u> | Town Trustee |
| <u>Cele Bull</u> | Town Trustee |
| <u>Laura Carney</u> | Town Trustee |
| <u>Mary Woodson</u> | Town Trustee |

Highway Commissioner Bill Goodman and Assessor Teresia Yakes were also present.

I. Meeting Called to Order

Supervisor Strenger Wayne called the meeting to order at 4:00 p.m. and requested an attendance roll call. All Board members were present.

II. Pledge of Allegiance

Supervisor Strenger Wayne opened the meeting with the Pledge of Allegiance.

III. Executive Session

A motion by Trustee Carney, seconded by Trustee Bull, to go into Executive Session to discuss specific personnel was approved 5-0 on a roll call vote at 4:02 p.m..

IV. Property Tax Levy Workshop Discussion

The Board reconvened in regular session at 5:10 p.m. to discuss the property tax levies for the Town Fund and Road District. Township Attorney, Richard Cowen, began the levy discussion by suggesting factors for the Board to consider in establishing a levy, starting with the current cash balance, then adding any additional revenues and projected expenses for the remainder of the fiscal year, and determining the desired level of reserves at the end of the fiscal year. He suggested a standard of 4-6 months of reserves, taking account of the timing of tax collections.

Supervisor Strenger Wayne outlined the Town Fund’s cash position, starting with the end of November balance of about \$1,258,000, plus about \$24,000 in the General Assistance (“G.A.”) Fund. She said that about \$16,000 more revenue is expected during the balance of the fiscal year ending in February, and projects average monthly expenditures of \$80,000 plus one-time expenses of \$30,000 for the Lake Forest-Lake Bluff Senior Center and \$10,000 for the social services partnership fund, about \$4,500 in accounts payable and \$50,000 as an additional transfer this fiscal year to the G.A. Fund. This would leave a balance at the end of the fiscal year of \$939,799, according to a sheet that was distributed taking account of these various factors.

John Albanese from the Township’s auditing firm of Eder Casella said 6-9 months of operating expenses are sometimes advised as a rule of thumb for reserves, but any amount between three months and one year of expenses can be considered reasonable, depending on the situation of the individual unit of government in question and the extent to which there might be unanticipated expenses for which the higher amount of reserves might be warranted.

Trustee Carney pointed out that the money transferred to the G.A. Fund should not be counted as an expense since the cash is still on hand until it is spent, a point with which John Albanese agreed.

Trustee Carney then said that she had kept and examined the monthly meeting documents for the fiscal year showing the monthly expenses of the Town and G.A. Funds through November. She had added them up and derived a monthly average for both the Town and G.A. Funds. Rounding these figures up, she projected total expenses for the fiscal year of about \$985,000, not including the \$10,000 mentioned for Mother’s Trust and \$30,000 for the Lake Forest-Lake Bluff Senior Center.

Trustee Baehr pointed out that there seemed to be general agreement that revenues for the fiscal year were about \$100,000 more than current and projected expenses.

John Albanese said that, based on the discussion and these calculations, for the levy to match current expenses, it should be \$907,000 plus \$40,000 for the two major expenditures yet to be made.

Supervisor Strenger Wayne said there will likely be unexpected expenses, such as a \$3,000 bill for legal expenses the Township had just received. Trustee Carney said she had rounded up on her estimates of monthly expenses.

There was a general discussion of reserves for the Town Fund. Judging from current cash reserves and projected expenses, Trustee Carney said she calculated \$758,274 as reserves at the end of May before the receipt of the first installment of property taxes in June. Supervisor Strenger Wayne and Office Manager Arona Landsman said they had used an extra half of month of expenses in calculating the low point of reserves since the first installment of taxes is received in about the middle of June, such that reserves at that point would be about \$700,000 to \$710,000. John Albanese said that this low point for reserves in the tax year does not necessarily define the amount of reserves.

Trustee Baehr said the question of how many months of reserves the Township really needs to have is something of a philosophical one, and John Albanese said that it is a matter for the Board to decide. Trustee Baehr said she did not want to see the amount of reserves grow, and there was general agreement on that point. She advocated coming up with a budget based on a levy rather than the other way around.

Supervisor Strenger Wayne said that her recommended budget of \$1,121,662 would have just a \$300 surplus over projected revenues whereas the budget for the current fiscal year was \$1,321,282.

Trustee Carney suggested setting the levy below the budget, assuming that, as in the past, various budgeted items will not actually be spent. Supervisor Strenger expressed concern about reducing the levy based on what is actually spent, noting the possible impact of such mandated expenses as compliance with the new Freedom of Information Act and the prevailing wage law.

Trustee Baehr said that the Board should at least reduce the levy to \$850,000, with most of the reduction being based on the current difference between revenues and expenses.

Attorney Richard Cowen said the Board could adopt a levy at this meeting and could subsequently decide to reduce it further by approving a levy abatement. He explained that an abatement resolution could reduce a levy once it is first adopted but not increase it.

Supervisor Strenger Wayne proposed a levy of \$1,023,000 as opposed to last year's levy of \$1,033,000.

Trustee Baehr said she would prefer that the levy be somewhere between \$825,000 and \$850,000, and Trustee Bull said she agreed.

After further discussion, Trustees Carney and Woodson suggested a levy of \$917,422 based on the extent to which the revenues are projected to exceed expenses for the current year and assuming a \$30,000 reduction next year in personnel expenses in the supervisor's office. Trustee Baehr restated her preference for a levy of \$850,000.

Supervisor Strenger Wayne said that no real tax savings are going to be achieved by cutting a small amount and that the Township is being penalized by being frugal. Trustee Carney said that the recommended levy was mainly based on the objective of reducing taxes to the level of actual expenditures.

There was a general discussion of the timing of an informal meeting to discuss the budget for the next fiscal year beginning March 1st and an agreement that January 12th would be a date that should work for everyone. The levy discussion then concluded at 6:55 p.m.

V. Consideration of Minutes from the Previous Town Board Meetings

Before the consideration of the minutes, because the levy workshop had been conducted in an open meeting but in an informal manner around a conference table without being video-recorded, Supervisor Strenger Wayne mentioned that these deliberations had concluded and that the formal portion of the Board's monthly meeting would resume and be video-recorded.

The Board then gave unanimous consent to consider the two property tax levies as the next order of business, which further discussion and action is covered in paragraph IX.a. below.

Regarding the minutes, a motion was made by Trustee Bull and seconded by Trustee Woodson to approve the minutes of the special meeting of the Board held November 9th to discuss the functions and services of the supervisor's office, which minutes had been presented and considered at the November 18th meeting and revised since then in several respects at the request of Supervisor Strenger Wayne. Supervisor Strenger Wayne asked that the minutes be further revised for two reasons – first, to note comments by Trustees Carney and Baehr that last year's grant to the Lake Forest-Lake Bluff Senior Center to support the services of a social worker was a one-time grant and, second, that, in regarding the discussion about

Shields Township food pantry recipients, she did not see a reason to differentiate as to whether they come from municipal Lake Bluff or the unincorporated areas and that there had been residents from both the Arden Shore subdivisions and Shoreacres who have been helped by the food pantry. The previous motion to adopt the revised minutes as presented without these additional changes was approved 4-1, with Supervisor Strenger Wayne opposed. Trustee Carney then moved the approval of the November 18th monthly Board meeting minutes, which motion was seconded by trustee Woodson and approved 5-0 on a voice vote.

VI. Payment of Bills

Town Fund Bills: A motion by Trustee Baehr, seconded by Trustee Woodson, to approve the payment of Town Fund expenses in the amount of \$81,227.62 passed 5-0 on a roll call vote.

Road & Bridge Bills: A motion by Trustee Carney, seconded by Trustee Bull, to approve the payment of Road Fund expenses in the amount of \$12,141.39 passed 5-0 on a roll call vote.

General Assistance Bills: A motion by Trustee Bull, seconded by Trustee Woodson, to approve the payment of General Assistance expenses in the amount of \$7,371.71 passed 5-0 on a roll call vote.

VII. Public Comment – Non-Agenda Items

Janice Schnobrich of Lake Bluff said she had submitted a Freedom of Information Act (“FOIA”) request to obtain a copy of the office lease. She then noted that Dan Rogers had written a letter to the editor of the Lake Forester in which he mentioned that she had filed a FOIA request. She said she thought it was “unethical” for the supervisor’s office to divulge the identify of those making FOIA requests.

Ms. Schnobrich then mentioned that she had attended the Thanksgiving service at the Church of Holy Spirit service on Thanksgiving and that the proceeds from the offering were designated for the church’s food pantry. She said that previous comments at a Shields Township Board meeting had seemed to suggest that the church’s food pantry was not significant, but she said she was told that they serve between 100 and 120 individuals per month and that most are from North Chicago and Waukegan. She noted that this service is very positive and imposes no costs on taxpayers.

Ms. Schnobrich concluded with a discussion of the staffing in the West Deerfield Township offices from which she said she had obtained W-2 salary information for staff members. She said the supervisor there handles all General and Emergency Assistance matters herself and has just one full-time staff member and that a part-time staff member handles their transportation program and other matters but receives no health insurance or pension benefits. In the West Deerfield assessor’s office, Ms. Schnobrich said there are just two people even though there are many more tax parcels than in Shields Township.

Pat Lynch of Lake Forest, the Executive Director of the I-Plus agency, which manages funds for recipients of certain government benefits, said she was pleased that Mother’s Trust will be funded again this year. She said that 30 percent of her agency’s clients are in Shields Township and that her agency is having a difficult time with donations down by 50% this year.

VIII. Old Business

a. Discuss and Adopt Public Comment Rules to Comply with Open Meetings Act

Supervisor Strenger Wayne mentioned that there had been a discussion at the prior month’s Board meeting about the new Illinois Open Meetings Act requirements for allowing public comment at local government meetings. Trustee Baehr moved approval of a resolution embodying the recommended rules for the Township, which reflect the Board’s current practices and include a 3-minute time limit on individual comments. This motion was seconded by Trustee Woodson and approved on a voice vote.

IX. New Business

a. Discuss and Adopt Town Fund and Road District Property Tax Levies

Town Fund Levy: Without further discussion beyond that which had taken place during the informal discussion of the Township’s property tax levies, Trustee Baehr made a motion, seconded by Trustee Bull, to adopt a Town Fund levy of \$850,000. Trustee Woodson said she favored the previously discussed levy amount of \$917,500 for now to make sure that reserves would be adequate. Trustee Carney said she also supported this amount for now and would consider additional cuts and that the levy could be reduced later. The motion for the \$850,000 levy then failed on a roll call vote with Trustees Baehr and Bull voting aye and Trustees Carney and Woodson and Supervisor Strenger Wayne voting no. Supervisor Strenger Wayne then moved approval of a Town Fund levy of \$917,500, which was seconded by Trustee Carney and approved 3-2 on a roll call vote with Trustees Baehr and Bull voting no.

Road District Levy: Supervisor Strenger Wayne noted that the Board is required to adopt the Highway Commissioner’s requested levy. Trustee Baehr moved approval of a Road District levy of \$460,738, as

requested by Highway Commissioner Goodman, which motion was seconded by Trustee Bull and approved 5-0 on a roll call vote.

b. Discuss and Adopt 2011 Meeting Schedule

Supervisor Strenger Wayne said a meeting schedule needs to be adopted and posted at the beginning of every year. She suggested holding one of the meetings every quarter in the North Chicago City Hall chambers. After some discussion of whether this would be confusing to members of the public who have come to expect the meetings at in the Township's Board meeting room, Trustee Bull suggested holding a meeting in North Chicago at some point to see how it goes over. Trustee Carney moved to approve the schedule of monthly meetings at their usual time and place but to hold a North Chicago meeting at a later date, which motion was seconded by Trustee Bull. Supervisor Strenger Wayne suggested a date certain for a North Chicago meeting, and Trustee Woodson recommended the April monthly meeting on April 21st at the North Chicago City Hall. The motion was unanimously adopted on a voice vote with this revision.

X. Public Comments – Agenda Items - None

XI. Township Officials' Reports

a. Highway Commissioner's Report

Highway Commissioner Goodman said that the Road District's work had been relatively easy so far this winter and that he had been working with office manager Arona Landsman on the Road District's property tax levy and budget. He added that the contractor had recently been paid for the drainage work that was completed and that reimbursement from the State is expected. He also thanked the Board for its approval of the Road District's property tax levy.

b. Trustees' Report - None

c. Supervisor's Report

In her Supervisor's Report, Supervisor Strenger Wayne mentioned the following items:

- Her appreciation for a number of donations to the Shields Township Food Pantry: \$3,000 from the Butler Family Foundation and over \$2,000 in other private donations, including one in response to a newsletter item from two years ago; 100 "Hugs Bags" from Lake County Cares with the cooperation of Jewel Food Stores, plus 20 turkeys and a donation of over \$200; 65 turkeys for individuals and families from State Senator Susan Garrett; 5 holiday meals from Koenig and Strey realtors; paper products and personal incidentals from Brownie Troop 1468 in Lake Bluff; thirteen 30 lb. meal boxes from Carefree Comfort and 5 computer monitors in Highland Park; a donation of condiments from Edmic, Inc. in Gurnee; monthly donations from the Lake Forest-Lake Bluff Kiwanis Club and the Union Church in Lake Bluff; a donation from a volunteer of 100 shopping bags from Fresh Market in Lake Forest; and a family that asked to have a family that could be "adopted" for a donation of holiday meals. Supervisor Strenger Wayne asked that other residents consider adopting a family to help through the food pantry.
- Her attendance and participation along with Trustee Woodson at a community open house at the North Chicago Library held on Saturday, November 20th. Supervisor Strenger Wayne estimated that she had seen about 65 people in the morning, and Trustee Woodson said she visited with about 15 in the afternoon.
- The Township's referral partners Catholic Charities and Community Action Partners are out of money until January and have been making referrals to the Township for assistance.

• XII. Adjournment

A motion to adjourn by Trustee Baehr, seconded by Trustee Woodson, was approved unanimously on a voice vote at 7:42 p.m..

Attest

David N. Barkhausen, Town Clerk