

LISLE TOWNSHIP
DUPAGE COUNTY, ILLINOIS
MINUTES OF THE SPECIAL MEETING OF JANUARY 29, 2011

CALL TO ORDER: The Special Meeting of the Board of Town Trustees was called to order at 9:00 a.m. at the Lisle Township office, 4711 Indiana Avenue, Lisle, IL, by Supervisor Clarke.

1. Roll Call:

Physically Present:

Supervisor Charles Clarke
Assessor John Trowbridge
Trustee Patti Voras
Trustee Vito Modica
Trustee Bob Klaeren
Trustee Michael Tams
Clerk Richard Tarulis

Present Electronically:

None

Absent:

Highway Commissioner Michael Dow

Others Present:

Virginia Wisdom
Paul Sjordal
Marcia Morren
Donna Prepejchal
Linda Merz
Steven Merz
Joe Heneghan
Dennis Clark
Melisa Urda
Sally Howland
Dooud Nabhan

2. Budget Workshop: Supervisor Clarke noted that Highway Commissioner Dow slipped and fell and was pretty severely injured. He is unable to walk but is willing to attend by telephone. Trustee Voras suggested we postpone the review of the Road District budget until Mr. Dow can attend, since we have several months before it must be completed. There was consensus to postpone the budget review for the Road District.

Trustee Tams read a statement regarding his budget philosophy, which is attached to these minutes in lieu of an inadequate summary by the Clerk.

Supervisor Clarke began a detailed review of the budget, starting at the top of page one. The salaries of elected officials are set by law prior to the beginning of a term, and cannot be changed. There were several public comments regarding salaries. Clerk Tarulis noted that the Township has not yet adopted Public Comment Guidelines, but Supervisor Clarke said he would allow questions and comments, and keep the meeting civil. He continued the budget review. The line for insurance and bonds covers everything except health insurance. The lines for capital improvements and contingency have been reduced, and the line for new building increased, in accordance with the tax levy. The Assessor's building is nearing the end of its useful life. There were questions and comments about the cost to replace the Assessor's building.

On page 2, Assessor Trowbridge noted that he is using a temporary employee when needed and not paying for full-time salary and benefits. There are funds budgeted for early retirement because the window runs until June.

On page 4, the newsletter is budgeted to be online only. The line for weed control is increased because the Township is responsible for vacant lots in unincorporated areas now. The Road District covered this expense in the past.

Trustees had questions about the transportation programs and Yellow Brick Road directory on pages 5 and 6.

The increase in General Assistance salaries is a shift from the Town Fund to the General Assistance Fund, rather than an actual increase. The line for food pantry is for capital equipment, such as freezers. The Friends of Lisle Township, a 501 (c)(3) tax exempt organization, is paying for most of the operating expenses and supplemental needs for the food pantry. .

The overall budget is decreased by 3.17% over last year. Supervisor Clarke said he plans to abate that percentage from the tax levy.

Mr. Clarke noted that the tentative budget must be posted for public inspection for 30 days prior to final action. Motion to post the tentative budget by Trustee Tams. Second by Trustee Klaeren. Voice vote, all in favor, motion passed.

3. Motion to Adjourn: Motion to adjourn by Trustee Modica, second by Trustee Voras. Voice vote, all in favor, motion passed. The meeting adjourned at approximately 11:00 a.m.

Respectfully Submitted,

Richard J. Tarulis

Township Clerk

Lisle Township Board of Trustees meeting Saturday January 29, 2011

Budget Workshop opening remarks Michael Tams. Lisle Township Trustee

I'd like to begin by thanking everyone for being here today, and to express my gratitude for the opportunity to hold another workshop as we did last year.

As a Trustee, we are the elected stewards of the public's money. I have a fiduciary and moral obligation to make the soundest financial decisions for the Township, and this is why I have made it my practice to consistently ask questions about why and how we do certain things.

In reviewing our budget, I have discovered that it is impossible to consider line items in the abstract. Each line item represents or is a manifestation of how we operate as a unit of government. Now, it is not our job as Trustees to supervise any of the department heads. Our job is to vote on budgets, among other things, and that is why we're here today. Our affirmative vote, however, is our endorsement of more than the budget. Our affirmative vote goes beyond abstract line-items and approves the conduct and the day-to-day operations of each department.

This is where we are met with some difficulty. To vote for a budget in good conscience requires two important things. First, it requires that we are sufficiently educated on the budget process how it works and why. Second, to vote for a budget in good conscience requires that we have reasonable knowledge that each department is operating under principles, behaviors, and policies that minimize the tax burden on residents of the Township. In the first hurdle, I have

. every reason to believe that this board is outstanding and that we understand the budget process as well as anyone, and better than most. The second requirement is another matter. will not speak for the other Trustees, but I can't affirmatively answer the question: does each department review its mandated purpose, operate within that mandated purpose, and continually seek cost-effective ways to deliver services under its mandated purpose?

I received a question from a tax payer recently. He asked me what our cost per foot of road maintained was; or, cost per mile, however we measure it. I am not aware that we measure that.

My natural response was that our residents are happy and praise our work far more than they complain about it. This was an unsatisfactory answer, I was told, because it fails to address two things: the opinion of the residents in incorporated areas in Lisle Township and the actual cost of the services we deliver, relative to other units of government or relative to an alternative delivery method.

Put another way, we were told recently that our leaf collection program cost us \$100,000, more or less. We know from past experience how Mother Nature can make leaf collection difficult for our staff. We all know that leaf collection is a more complicated operation than it sounds, in terms of labor, scheduling, equipment, hauling away of debris, and so on. What we don't know, what we're not investigating, or at best what I'm not aware we may be

investigating is, could we partner with another unit of government or contract it out and still deliver the service, but at a cost less than we are currently paying?

I know that my questions may seem tedious. I want everyone in this room, and anyone who might ever wonder about my motivations to know that it is my firm belief that we have a moral obligation to use extreme caution with the Peoples' money. It is because of this obligation that we must be convinced that our vote for this or any appropriation will be in that same spirit, and because of this, we have to vote against any budget or appropriation that doesn't meet that hurdle in our minds. I don't know what the implications are for not passing a budget but am hopeful that isn't a problem we're going to have, and that the board and the department heads will reach a happy conclusion to this process.

I know this is asking a lot - it is asking a new level of disclosure, at a minimum and a somewhat radical review of each department's operations at most. Initiating and completing a review like this before approving a budget may not be possible given the time constraints we are facing. If a department commences such a review with a solemn promise to complete it and take action where possible before our next year's budget-approval process, while I can't speak for the rest of the board, I would consider that an adequate step that we could hang our hats on.

We have an opportunity. The people in this room can set the example for how government should be run, and I hope you'll join me in this effort.