

Williamsburg Township Board of Trustees Minutes

Date 12/28/2021

The Williamsburg Township Board of Trustees met on Tuesday December 28, 2021 for a special meeting. Chairperson Jordan called the meeting to order at 7:00 PM, and all joined in the Pledge of Allegiance to the Flag. Guy Bainum, Bari Henning, and Gary Jordan answered the roll call. Also present were Fiscal Officer, Gregory W. Carson, Ed Boll, Kevin Wiedemann and Brian Tatman.

Mr. Jordan said that we have decided that there is a need to discuss a tax levy for the fire and emergency services. Mr. Carson said that the school board had talked about a tax levy on the May ballot, so out of respect, we had thought we might do a levy in November. However, the school board has decided to put their levy on the November ballot, so we need to put ours on the May ballot. He said that he had already begun putting the information together in case the need arose to go in May instead of November. He said that he and Mr. Henning met with the County Auditor's office last month to get preliminary numbers of what a millage of valuation might generate in revenue. He said that he and Mr. Henning had spoken to Mr. Wiedemann about what the emergency services department needs to serve Williamsburg Township residents in the proper fashion for safety of lives. Mr. Henning said that he had spoken with Tate Township about how they operate their department. Tate Township has 9 full time staff and has 6 staff on duty during the daytime and 4 staff on duty overnight. Mr. Carson said that we cannot afford that unless we run a huge levy. Mr. Wiedemann agreed that we could run our department on 4 staff at the station 24/7 and he would be the 5th person during the daytime hours, and we would still have some volunteers to cover anything else that we might need. Mr. Wiedemann said that we are having a tough time getting volunteers in today's society. He said that we still have several volunteers, but it is not like it used to be. He said that we are struggling to get part time staff. He said that he is covering numerous shifts himself when we cannot find staff since he is salary, but he cannot physically do much more than he is doing now for his health and safety of himself and our residents. He said that for example on Christmas, we could not find staff to run our EMS, so Ms. Morgan volunteered to provide coverage for free if she could run from her house if the tone dropped since she lives just a couple of blocks away from the station. He said that we are having a tough time providing proper coverage putting lives in danger. He said that he thinks that if we raise the wages slightly and hire 3 full time staff, we could run a very efficient department. He said that we currently have 4 staff including himself during the daytime and our run time is about 1 ½ minutes out of the station. He said that during the overnight, we only have 2 staff. He said that EMS run times are about 2 ½ minutes, but if we have a fire run, it can be as much as 15 minutes for the volunteers to get the notifications, get out of bed and get dressed and get to the station to get out the door. Everyone agreed that run times of that length are putting lives in danger. Mr. Carson said that we have not run a levy in almost 20 years. He said that we had a decent carryover balance for that past several years, but we have spent about \$100,000 more than we took in during the last 3 years and the carryover is disappearing extremely fast. Even if we do not add staff, the need for a levy is already here, but if we are going to pass a levy to continue operations as status quo, we might as well run it to staff our department in the best way possible to serve the residents in a safe manor and not put lives in jeopardy. Mr. Carson said that based on the needs of the department, he calculated the cost for the additional staff with benefits at a cost of around \$500,000/year. He said that combined with our current deficit of \$100,000/year puts our needs at around \$600,000/year. He said that based on the auditor's calculations, we would need about a 5-mill levy to provide roughly \$650,000 in funds annually. The extra money would help to offset the additional costs of more staff uniforms, bunker gear and inflation for several years into the future and hopefully we wouldn't need to go back to the taxpayers for several years. He said that based on the Auditor's "preliminary" calculations, that would cost the owner of \$100,000 roughly \$175/year. Lots of discussion ensued on various needs and various scenarios, but the trustees agreed that this seemed like a very reasonable approach to provide our residents with the needed services to keep Williamsburg Township safe.

Mr. Carson explained that he had discussed how to oversee a tax levy with the Prosecutor's office. He said that they provided a resolution to pass tonight. Once this resolution is passed, the Auditor's office will provide concrete #'s to us. He said that once that happens, the prosecutor will provide a second resolution for us to pass at the first meeting in January. He said that we needed to have this special meeting tonight to meet the timelines needed, because once the second resolution passes, it will go to the Board of Elections to certify for the ballot, and everything needs to be complete by February 2 to be on the May ballot.

Mr. Henning motioned to pass Resolution #7-21 for the necessity to levy a tax in excess of the ten-mill limitation for fire and emergency medical services in the amount of 5 mills. Mr. Bainum second. All yeas.

Mr. Bainum motioned to adjourn at approximately 8:30 p.m. Mr. Henning second. All yeas.

Fiscal Officer

Chairperson