

Williamsburg Township Board of Trustees Minutes
Special Meeting
October 26, 2022

The Williamsburg Township Board of Trustees held a Special Meeting on Wednesday, October 26, 2022 at the Williamsburg Emergency Services Building, for the purpose of providing information on the Fire and EMS Tax Levy on the ballot November 8, 2022. This was the only business conducted at the meeting and it was informational only. Mr. Bainum called the meeting to order at 7:00 p.m., 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, Doug Lefferson, Emergency Services Chief Jason McCarthy and approximately 27 others, primarily community residents (sign in sheet available at Township Hall).

Mr. Bainum introduced the Trustees and Fiscal Officer. Mr. Jordan spoke about the failure of the levy on the May ballot. He stated it was the first levy in 20 years and that the Township could have prepared better. Mr. Jordan stated that the Township has provided more and better levy information this time. We do not want to wait for a crisis. The Township is changing. Mr. Jordan turned the meeting over to Fiscal Officer Doug Lefferson for an informational PowerPoint presentation. Mr. Lefferson's presentation included levy facts (5 mills, Continuing, estimated annual revenue \$645,000), estimated cost to homeowners, the need for additional full-time and part-time staff, a \$100,000 per year operating deficit, a new staffing design, use of the levy funds, revenue generated from the Joint Economic Development District (Nestle' Purina and Design Within Reach), and the ballot wording. Mr. Lefferson indicated his presentation in its entirety will be posted on the Township website.

Mr. Weaver asked about the use of grants for funding. Mr. Henning indicated we have looked at grants like Felicity received. These grants are typically limited in timeframe, like two years. Grants are better for one-time expenditures. Grants are not typically viewed as a good way to fund on-going salaries. Mr. Jordan added the grants are not going to cover our needs in this case. Ms. Levine stated that landlords will pay more. The Trustees did not disagree, but added often these costs are passed on to renters. Mr. McTague indicated his argument or fight was not with Fire and EMS, he believes the need is there. He stated his stance was against tax abatements. Mr. Lefferson reiterated that while there was a property tax abatement, the schools were receiving money through PILOT payments and the Township was receiving funds through the JEDD. Ms. Lawrence mentioned the need for additional EMS training. Mr. Lomske asked if COVID vaccine mandates for employees reduced volunteerism. Captain Pollitt indicated there was no mandate for Williamsburg Township. Chief McCarthy thought burnout was more the reason for decreased volunteerism. Mr. Weaver asked about the plan to retain people. Mr. McCarthy and the Trustees said retention would be through competitive salaries, benefits, training, and a good work environment. Ms. Levine thanked the Fire and EMS staff. She asked about a financial model as the presentation was in summary form. Mr. Lefferson stated that it is basically salary and benefits to support the new staffing model. Chief McCarthy provided some comments emphasizing the need is real. He stated that he cannot fix the use of tax abatements but knows the funding is needed to support appropriate Fire and EMS response. Mr. Weaver stated he did not want to have regret or the burden to bear if we lose a person. Ms. Lung reiterated she did not want that regret.

The Trustees and Fiscal Officer thanked everyone for attending.

Mr. Henning motioned to adjourn at approximately 8:41 p.m. Mr. Bainum second. All yeas.

Fiscal Officer

Chairperson