WESTFIELD FIRE AND RESCUE DISTRICT WORKING SESSION

July 29, 2024

The Westfield Fire and Rescue District Working Session, hosted by the Westfield Township Trustees, held at 8515 Virginia Dr in Westfield Center, was called to order at 6:09 pm by Kent Patterson.

Attendance: Micheal Schmidt, Kent Patterson, Craig Horner, Melissa Kurtz, Terri Grimm, Julie Carr

Included is an exhibit of the power-point presentation that was covered at the session.

Terri Grimm introduced the township trustees, fiscal officer and employees.

It was corrected that the village pays out of their general fund for what would be the Village's portion of the levy if passed.

Question from Dale Perkowski- how do we pay for future expenses if we already depleted the budget? A- that is why we need the levy funds as this is an ongoing issue. We do not have the money to repair future issues. We will have to take from allowed funds and move money that is allocated for other expenses to cover repairs.

Statement made by Lee Evans as calls increase, the cost related to Sherriff's fee increases each year, increasing 4% every year.

Statement from Dale Perkowski- the older the vehicle the more liability, this truck could be deemed unsafe in the near future.

Question from Brad Winter- had you not made the reduction in payroll would the capital reserve be even lower? Answer- possibly yes, with the costs in payroll as this is where we had to pull funds from in the past to cover costs.

Assistant Chief Young shared a break down of how the payroll costs have been cut. Included in exhibits.

AARP and Cares Act money from Westfield Township was donated for equipment for the Fire and Rescue District.

Dave Young shared that for our ambulance services- the average response time is 7 minutes and 58 seconds. He also shared the four members on staff have paid personally for EMS class that costs the individual for books and tuition, $6,500. That does not include fuel and time. This course is 13 months long.

Question from Jason Myers-Is the cost of schooling just for paramedic school or does that include fire education? Answer- yes, just paramedic, this does not include fire training.

Question: At night, how many responders live in the area? The Chief shared 9 live in the area.

Schmidt added that Cloverleaf School is also within the township and they have roughly 4,000 people on campus. Westfield Insurance/Group also has a large amount of employees during the day. And the soccer fields, host a large number of guests.

Comment from Tadd Davis- this also includes 2 massive truck stops and the warehouse that will someday be used. We have to take that into consideration.

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Rick Chilcote- When you do an assist, is there any money you get from that assist? Answer- no, this is part of a mutual aid agreement. How many call outs were made last year? 568 calls in 2023, this includes all responses.

Greg Oakes- Do you normally have both vehicles respond- A- if needed.

Dale Perkowski- Do the business have an increase in property taxes as well? Answer- yes, residential and commercial both pay property tax.

Greg Oakes- can you outline the strategy for the levy campaign and when does that kick off? Answer- this is the kick off, we do need funding for the communications we want to send out. We will host another meeting in October.

G Oakes- Will you be going door to door to communicate with the residents? Yes, in the township we will going door to door.

G Oakes-What is the budget for the campaign? We would like to do short videos, mailers, old signs from before that we can update ourselves which would cost us roughly $4,000.

Jason Myers- what is the call volume in 2022? Answer- do not have that info off hand. What about year to date? 339 calls. The verbiage on the actual millage- will that be the same as May 2nd? Answer, no, that will be different and will be a shorter, easy to understand description of the levy.

Rick Robbs- was the last levy a permanent levy? No, it was just for 5 years.

Jason Myers statement- I was looking into the marking campaign, and a township resident of 13 years, I did some research and found the NFPA standard has changed. The standard has reduced from 20 years to 15 years for the fire apparatus. I would suggest sharing the cost of continuing education costs and the pay you are giving our fire department as this is important for our residents to know. Training is expensive and we need to have a way to create retention, and it needs to be marketed to the residents. He suggested an annual report be sent out and made public online. Q- the 1999 truck, can it be refurbished vs buying new? Answer- no, I have not looked into that as we are trying to downsize. This is a very large vehicle and the reason we are looking for smaller has to do with the size of the township driveways. Q- how many quotes did you get for the replacement of the fire truck? Answer- so far one quote from a manufacturer in Dublin, OH. I did get costs from surrounding townships. Q- would you have to get a loan? A: yes, but we only have $67,000 in capital reserves. We could not get approved for a loan unless we pass a levy. Q- for insurance how does your policy work? A: it's a government insurance agency and we do not get money back. Q- do you keep a history of claims? A: Since 2019 there have not been claims. He added this is very important to market.

Question- If you get a new truck, will you sell the old one? Answer- yes, we will try to sell the old truck.

Brad Winter- It was once said the tankers would not leave the road, but in today's reduction in personal we need to get the vehicles closer.

Dan Soboleski asked what was the marks money used for? A- This was for radios. Q- Is the taxable value of the building alone, property or the taxable of the property? A: taxable value of the property. Q- You need a 2.5 mill levy to replace one truck, based on one quote. Would it not be prudent to get more quotes? A: Yes, but I do know that they are all similar based on discussion with other fire departments. But this levy isn't to cover just one truck- capital expenditures are just one of the factors that was taken into consideration to figure the requested millage. We will get more quotes when the time to purchase comes. We also need to replace an ambulance from 2014 as well. Quotes can increase within the next 30-45 days.

Jason Myers- On the contracted services, money is allocated for mowing. Would it be cheaper to rent a zero turn and pay for maintenance? Answer- we have looked into that and with limited staffing we have looked into the pros and cons and the costs. Our contracted price includes spring and fall cleanup.

Terri Grimm added that we are happy to take any questions, please email us to info@westfieldtownship.org. And if anyone is interested in volunteering, please reach out.

Patterson makes a motion to end the work session at 7:49. Schmidt seconds the motion. Role Call- Horner- yes, Schmidt- yes, Patterson- yes.

Meeting adjourned.

Kent Patterson

Michael Schmidt

Craig Horner