

Milton Township Board
Annual Meeting
March 30, 2009

Members present: Bargy, Atkinson, Ball, and Pharo

Members absent: Cole, excused.

Also present: Weinzapfel and 28 audience members

Bargy called the meeting to order at 6 pm and the Pledge was recited.

Budget Hearing

There is no tax hike this year. Last year, the electorate voted to bring the millage to 1 mil. That's what the tax hike is. There is no tax increase.

Last Year's Budget Discussion:

Keith Termaat asked how much of an increase is this budget over last year. The increase is about \$90,000.

On page 3 regarding revenue sharing, we've received the final payment of around \$24,000 +.

Keith Termaat asked regarding a 9% spending increase. With the state of the economy, how can the township increase spending? Bargy said we are utilizing money we're receiving. We're not increasing the tax. Termaat suggested not increasing spending. Put the extra money in the bank. Reduce the millage rate and freeze the budget. Bargy said we can cut back on roads and all of the non-essentials. Atkinson said this is surplus dollars. It is not an increase in taxes. We've increased the budget to spend more on roads.

Tom Streeter said the board is saying there is no tax increase. The fact is that my tax bill is going up. Respectfully, don't say there is no tax increase. Bargy said that comes from the state and the county, not from the township.

Dave Meeker said he feels the same frustration on taxes even though it's not from the township, now is not the time to hold the money in the bank.

Ron Boals said it looks like you're under budget on many items and he commends the board on that. On page 4, he asked about the land. Bargy said it wasn't planned for, but the township purchased property adjacent to the park.

Keith Termaat asked regarding the increase in spending on roads for page 6. Does this include the roads millage. Bargy said yes. Termaat asked where it would be spent. Bargy said we are waiting for quotes.

Ron Boals made a comment about Erickson road and the minimum number of people using it.

Toby Way comments on being under budget in areas.

Jerry Mensing asked how much can be done with the road money. Bargy said probably about a mile at the current prices for asphalt. Mensing suggested holding the road budget until next year and possibly getting more miles. Bargy said this is certainly an option.

Doug Strang said that putting off infrastructure saves a buck now, but it will cost two dollars later on.

Tom Addes asked regarding the fact that they were under budget, if they hadn't bought the land deal. Wouldn't there be that much more money this year. Bargy agreed, and said also, an added expense is the recycling center.

Dave Meeker said he appreciates the recycling center, despite the added expense. Also, the bottom line was not to save money, but to get more people to recycle.

Hal Jackson asked how big of a contingency fund are you allowed. Bargy said something like 30%.

Katherine Vermerish asked about fund accounting versus line item accounting. You are allowed to borrow from one to add to the other to help out. Bargy said yes. If we have excess in one fund, we can transfer by vote of the board.

Jerry Mensing said if ER starts their own recycling center, our cost might drop. This will result in saving money.

Keith Termaat said the recycling center is great. Has the board considered contracting with only one waste hauler, this would reduce the amount of vehicles driving on our roads?

Dick Wright asked if you take out the land acquisition, this is about a 30% increase in overall spending. Bargy said some of that is extra on the roads and park projects including a walking path. Repairs need to be done to some of the courts.

Keith Termaat asked if all of these comments were being taken into consideration. Bargy said yes.

Katherine Vermerish asked regarding paid positions? Are they full time or part time? Bargy explained that the ZA is full time, but the rest are part time. Bargy discussed all who are eligible for benefits.

Tom Streeter budget to budget, you're asking for a \$263k increase? Bargy said yes. Why are costs going up so much? Bargy said most of it is the roads and the park.

Amy Jenema said that the library millage has come in, but has not been paid out. So, there is about 100k that is sitting in the General fund right now. So, the actual is \$163k.

The increase in the budget is in support of recycling, parks, and roads

Ron Boals asked how much under budget we were. Bargy said that wasn't totaled up, but that money went into savings.

Mack Endo asked why the park budget is up? Bargy said there are some repairs and a proposed walking path.

Dave Meeker said the courts are very expensive. On the other side, those are used in the summer and there is very little empty time. It is very well used.

Jerry Mensing asked regarding the re-surfacing of the basketball courts. Bargy said that is figured into the budget.

Next Year's Budget Discussion:

Keith Termaat asked regarding total revenue? Is there about a 4.4% increase? Yes. If no houses were sold. Can the board propose a millage rate reduction? Jenema said yes, the board could do this. Bargy said this is based on what was just collected. If we reduce the millage, this would affect next years budget. It wouldn't affect this year's budget.

Tom Streeter requested the board consider making changes so that the amount being spent does not increase. Hold the line. To take that position would be responsible. What we are hearing, is that you are struggling with a way to spend this money. Figure out a way not to spend this money.

Fire Budget Comment:

Keith Termaat asked regarding if money could be taken from the Fire fund and used elsewhere? Bargy said we can borrow from it, but it must be paid back.

Toby Way asked regarding a reimbursement. Ball said that was insurance claim.

Bargy said the board will discuss the budget and take all comments under advisement and then, the board will make a decision. Ball discussed the problem with the notification. The law states a 6-day notice. It was in the paper in February when the meetings were set as well.

Mack Endo asked regarding the fire budget and why it's going down? According to the accounting, it's actually a typo, and the budget has increased. Bargy said the biggest increase is in the contingency.

Keith Termaat said the ER Village and Township lowered their ISO rating. Is there enough money in the contingency to get us a better ISO rating? Pharo said water would not fix the ISO rating. ISO test run is going to be this fall. Weinzapfel said that it is up to the state as to when this test will be scheduled.

Dave Meeker asked what is projected on the ISO rating. Weinzapfel said he's hoping for a 7.

Budget hearing is closed at 7:13 pm.

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Bargy is a moderator and everyone else has a much say. To review, the recycling center was opened and has gone well. We are looking at buying other bins and creative bin sharing with Elk Rapids. Last year we paved E Elk Lake Drive and Mo Len Drive and a half-mile of Western. Additional property was purchased for the park. There is a garage and septic available and two wells. The pavillion was completed at the park. We did receive a check for \$63890. This is the total payment on grant money from the DNR for finishing the project.

Keith Termaat asked regarding the price that was paid for the property. Bargy explained the cost of moving the modular home. The property was more important. We took the assessment and doubled it. Termaat said it looks like the township paid way too much.

Dave Meeker asked if the land was purchased? Bargy said yes. Then it is a done deal. Lets not dwell on the past, lets move forward. Meeker stated, if you don't like the decisions the board makes, vote in other people.

Katherine Vermerish said Mr. Termaat is requesting some explanation of fiscal responsibility.

Bargy said the board discussed it and felt it was reasonable and the decision was made.

Mrs. Jackson asked why it was purchase. Bargy said the property was situated in the park; it was always the intension to purchase these properties and would cause fewer problems with residents.

As you see in the budget, we're hoping to do some more work in the park and pave some roads. One other thing is that people have noticed a phragmities problem on GT Bay and Lake Michigan. The township will be passing an ordinance to control this. We are going to take care of getting the permits from the DNR and DEQ. A letter is going out to all property owners affected. There will be permission slips that must be returned and will give people permission to walk the waterfront to check for this species. We're asking for \$1 per foot for eradication of this problem. The only way to control is spraying it. It takes about 2 years to get it under control. You can't dig it up or pull it up, it continues and grows by rysomes. It can grow about 15 feet tall and takes over everything and destroy the eco system. Spraying has to be done in late August. There is a meeting coming up in TC on this subject. June 6th at Hagerty Center.

Keith Termaat said the approach in Saginaw Bay is completely different. Their approach is much better. This grows in the high water mark and should be coordinated by the state and federal government. Bargy said we cannot spend money on private property.

Ron Boals said Keith Termaat came to the board to fix his Ecoli problem. Now he wants the federal government to pay for something that he would have to pay for. Doesn't sound fair.

Bargy pointed out a drawing of the park and the proposed walking path.

Approval of Last Year's Minutes

March 27, 2008

Motion to approve the minutes as presented by Jerry Mensing. Seconded by Toby Way. Motion carried.

Amy Jenema, assessor of Milton Township gave a presentation. She discussed a proposed bill. Major changes are that Milton Township saw about a 3% decrease. Only one neighborhood took a significant increase. Torch Lake took the biggest per/foot drop as a whole.

Salary Resolution

Resolution 2009-02 Supervisor's Salary

Motion by Termaat to approve. Seconded by Paul Patchen. Motion carried.

Resolution 2009-03 Clerk's Salary

Motion to approve clerk's salary by Doug Strang. Seconded by Dave Meeker. 4 in favor. Many opposed.

Motion by Streeter to increase the clerk by \$2200. The total amount would be \$21240. Seconded by Tom Madden. All in favor. None opposed.

Resolution 2009-04 Treasurer's Salary

This is a 5% increase.

Electorate discussed the increase and a possible decrease.

This resolution died for lack of a motion.

Motion made by Mark White, seconded by Mike Hamilton for Atkinson to retain the same wage of \$26,292. Those in favor, 23. Those opposed, 2. Motion carried.

Bargy said there are two new planning commission members. Geddes was lost to cancer and McKimmy has also resigned due to health issues. Their service is to be commended.

New members are Bob Kingon and Terri Kopkau

Jenema said there is a conditional rescind, you are able to file and claim homestead.

Keith Termaat asked about our pay for the trustees compared to surrounding township. We are at \$2100.

Paul Patchen asked if there would be a consent agenda meeting following the annual. Bary stated it will be tomorrow afternoon.

Dean Ginther said he finds it bizarre regarding granting people's salaries. It seems haphazard. Perhaps next year, we could gather info and provide comparisons and not make it seem to be random. Atkinson said a compensation committee can be formed, but if that's done, the committee has final say.

Katherine Vermerish said that it's good that Bary recommended a salary freeze for himself.

Weinzapfel gave a report on ZBA and Planning Commission and the Ambulance.

Atkinson said she asked for a salary increase because she doesn't take health care coverage. That was the basis of the request.

Meeting adjourned at 8:08 pm.