

**COMMITTEE-OF-THE-WHOLE
MINUTES OF THE MEETING OF THE PRESIDENT
AND THE BOARD OF TRUSTEES OF
THE VILLAGE OF ARLINGTON HEIGHTS
BOARD ROOM
TUESDAY, NOVEMBER 10, 2021
7:00 P.M.**

BOARD MEMBERS PRESENT: Mayor Thomas Hayes, Trustees Bertucci, Canty, Grasse, LaBedz, Scaletta, Schwingbeck & Tinaglia

STAFF MEMBERS PRESENT: R. Recklaus, T. Kuehne, M. Juarez, K. Baumgartner, M. Mattio, C. Perkins, C. Papierniak, D. Schultz, C. Hanselman, and Various Department Support Staff

OTHERS PRESENT: Steve Daday and Brookes Ebetsch from Metropolis

SUBJECTS:

- A. Staff follow-up from previous meeting
 - B. Performing Arts at Metropolis
 - C. Review of Department Budgets
 - D. Final Recommendations of Committee-of-the-Whole to Board of Trustees for Property Tax Levy
 - E. Final Recommendations of Committee-of-the-Whole to Board of Trustees for the 2021 Budget
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President Hayes called the meeting at 7:00 PM.

Staff follow-up from previous meeting

Trustee Scaletta requested a copy of the Metropolis Theater's prior year budget and copies were provided to the Board.

Performing Arts at Metropolis

Mr. Steve Daday, President of Metropolis' Board and Brookes Ebetsch, Executive Director of Metropolis Theater said the last two years have been challenging for the Theater. They were forced to close their doors in March 2020 due to the pandemic, but were able to offer two shows in a tent theater thanks to the collaboration and support of the Village. The Theater has since reopened and while shows have been successful, Mr. Daday said their outlook is still mixed because of circumstances they cannot control. Ms. Ebetsch added that they continue to be very conservative with the budget.

Trustee Scaletta thanked Mr. Daday and Ms. Ebetsch for being responsible with their budget and how they cut costs when needed. In regards to the 2022 budget, he asked why the cost of goods is lower than in 2019. Ms. Ebetsch said the reason for the decrease is because they will have less presented shows on the calendar. Trustee Scaletta also praised the Metropolis for adopting a vaccine mandate.

President Hayes asked how many people have expressed discontent with the vaccine mandate. Ms. Ebetsch said they have had minimal issues.

Trustee Tinaglia said it's very gratifying to see that Theater sponsors and donors have continued their contributions throughout the entire pandemic.

Trustee LaBedz, Bertucci, and Canty all expressed their thanks for all the hard work of Theater staff.

Resident Keith Moens expressed his disagreement with the Village's support of the Metropolis Theater. He said the Theater is not the heartbeat of downtown nor the economic engine we expected it to be. He noted that during the pandemic, Metropolis was not operating yet the downtown district did well. He said that since 2005 the Village has spent somewhere between \$7-8million dollars on the theater and annual contributions continue to rise despite prior indication that the Village's forever subsidies would be \$175,000. He added that Metropolis is subsidized by all residents, but enjoyed by those at an above-median income level. Mr. Moens expressed his concern that Performing Arts at Metropolis Board meetings are closed to the public, and he suggested a review by the Illinois Attorney General's Office. In his opinion, Metropolis should be sold as he believes the investment is not worth the return, or they should allow public attendance and participation during their Board meetings for transparency and oversight purposes.

President Hayes disagreed with Mr. Moens and said that while the pandemic affected Metropolis, it continued to provide direct and indirect benefits to the community from a financial and non-financial aspect. He is confident that Metropolis will return to pre-pandemic levels and is comfortable with the support the Village offers them. In regards to the open meetings, President Hayes said that they are a non-for-profit that is not subject to the open meetings act. Further, the Village cannot control or request they open their meetings to the public.

Trustee Bertucci echoed President Hayes' sentiments and added that the Village's monetary contribution to Metropolis is from Food & Beverage taxes and not from property taxes. He said Metropolis is one of the few places that supports the performing arts for kids and shared that his son took lessons at Metropolis and also worked there. He added that a lot of performing arts kids take advantage of and enjoy the school at Metropolis and those children deserve just as much of a right as a child that plays football or baseball.

Trustee Scaletta disagreed with Mr. Moens' opinions and said the Metropolis has helped build and sustain the downtown area. As a Board Member of Meet Chicago Northwest, he knows first-hand that Metropolis is important to marketing the downtown as a destination for people who come from out of town to attend different events and conventions in the Northwest suburbs. He

added that Metropolis attendees not only support the Theater but also support other downtown businesses such as retailers and coffee shops. He reiterated that the support the Village extends to the Metropolis comes from food & beverage taxes and not real estate taxes.

Resident Melissa Cayer said the Village's 1.25% food & beverage tax should be abolished and also expressed disagreement with the Village's contributions to Metropolis.

Review of Department Budgets – Department Representatives

Boards & Commissions

Mr. Recklaus said the Boards & Commissions budget normally doesn't change. However, there are two items of note. The first, a decrease in dues for Meet Chicago Northwest because of decreased 2020 actual hotel tax receipts. Second, an increase in examinations for the Board of Fire & Police Commissioners for upcoming testing.

President Hayes asked if there were any requests from any of the Board & Commissions for money that we declined. Mr. Recklaus said he didn't believe so.

Resident Melissa Cayer suggested that several Boards and Commission be held at the call of the Board instead of advising on particular issues as it is very expensive.

Planning & Community Development

Mr. Perkins began by stating that it has been a busy year working on the details of Arlington Alfresco, the development and approval of a zero-interest COVID loan program, creating a zoning overlay for Arlington International Racecourse, and the downtown parking guidance system and signage installation.

In regards to the budget, he said there is an overall decrease of 9.7% for funds managed by his department. The General Fund saw a decrease of 2.2%.

Trustee Scaletta asked why in comparison to 2021, the budget for Discover Arlington decreased in 2022. He also asked where marketing costs for Alfresco are budgeted. Mr. Perkins said the 2021 budget for Discover Arlington included a study which will not be repeated in 2022. In regards to the Alfresco marketing, some of the 2021 costs were covered from the Economic Development account as well as the Zero-Interest Loan Fund. Trustee Scaletta said the Village may have to hire consulting services to develop the Alfresco brand. Mr. Perkins agreed that more marketing will be needed in the future.

Mr. Perkins went on to discuss the different TIF districts. In regards to TIF IV, he said this year they have acquired 139 E. Golf Terrace and are working with different developers that may be interested. Pertaining to TIF V, there have been ongoing challenges with IDOT for lighting and signage approval. Mr. Perkins discussed a new concept to place easement signage, and negotiations with private property owners has begun. In the Hickory/Kensington District, there is a redevelopment agreement with 4 N. Hickory and construction should begin soon. Lastly, the

South Arlington Heights Road TIF has a negative fund balance of about \$20,000 but that was anticipated. Mr. Perkins said that will change once the assessment level is approved by the assessor. They are looking at adding pedestrian crosswalks in the area.

Trustee Scaletta asked if any money has been budgeted for the replacement of banners on S. Arlington Heights Road because banners appear to be missing. Mr. Perkins said not at the moment. Trustee Scaletta suggested either replacing the banners or moving them closer together because esthetically it doesn't look good.

In regards to TIF IV, Trustee Tinaglia expressed his disappointment with IDOT and their disapproval of the proposed lighting and signage. Mr. Perkins said there was a lot of discussion with IDOT, and the cost outweighed their concept approval.

Trustee Canty asked how often TIF Districts' are reviewed for early termination. Mr. Perkins said it is dependent on project completion and payment of debt services.

Trustee Schwingbeck asked what the size of the lot within the Hickory/Kensington District is, if the price has been negotiated, and what the plan is for that property. Mr. Perkins said he doesn't recall the square footage but it could be about half acre, the price is set, and currently the property will remain vacant or used as a short-term parking area. He added it is very deteriorated.

In regards to Capital Projects, Mr. Perkins said that some funds budgeted for 2021 projects were not used, and he anticipated a budget amendment in 2022. Projects include Downtown Streetscape Improvements and Rand Road Corridor Identification Enhancements. The Affordable Housing Trust Fund saw an increase in funds.

Resident Melissa Cayer expressed her disagreement with TIF Districts.

Public Works

Cris Papierniak said that in 2021, Public Works successfully completed one of the most aggressive capital plans to date, with the completion of the Greenbrier infrastructure improvement project. In addition, they worked on the ever-changing demands of Alfresco, road improvement projects, and Kensington Road resurfacing. In 2022, his department will continue improvements with infrastructure, reduce water loss and frequent watermain breaks, assist with several sustainability projects, and explore the use of electric-hybrid vehicles and fuel alternatives for the Village fleet.

Trustee Scaletta noted that in 2020, Public Works saw a 40% increase in service requests and praised the division for providing Village residents with exceptional customer service. Mr. Papierniak attributed the high service demands to their efforts in engaging residents using Arlington @ Work citizen requests and Next Door. He added that all work order communications are documented for transparency.

Trustee LaBedz asked if the program to replace paver bricks in the downtown area is ongoing, specifically around the North garage, as some paver bricks have sunk in. Mr. Papierniak said the program began in 2012, and since then there have been new requirements for ADA ramps which has made each project costlier. They will continue to replace/repair paver bricks but the amount of intersections they can do will be limited based on budget.

Trustee Bertucci inquired why the budgeted amount for general insurance decreased by 30%. Mr. Kuehne said it pertains to the General Liability Insurance Fund and the Workers' Compensation Insurance Fund reallocation of services charges. Trustee Bertucci asked if the 2% increase in commodities is realistic based on current price hikes in supply chain. Mr. Papierniak said it will depend on the cost of petroleum.

Trustee Canty noted that in 2020 the Village removed as many trees as were replanted, and asked if that is due to better tree maintenance or planting techniques. Mr. Papierniak said that through the years they've learned about tree diversity, and what will thrive in the area's harsh conditions. Currently, they use about 30 species of trees that can sustain this environment.

Fire Department

Interim Fire Chief Schultz stated that like many other departments, the Fire Department was affected by COVID-19 and forced to make changes with training and modify operations. He highlighted that in 2021, the Department has returned to a back-to-basics training approach which has improved overall efficiencies, recording of drills to create training videos, they have worked with the Police Department on active shooter training, and have hosted community outreach pop-up block parties to keep residents educated. He reported that the GEMT program initiated in 2019 has been successful in recovering ambulance costs Medicaid doesn't cover.

In regards to the budget, Interim Chief Schultz said there are no major variances, and that his department has done a great job at keeping expenses in line with the budget. He added that while they have had to purchase additional gear due to the pandemic, FEMA has reimbursed a portion of the additional costs. In 2022, they plan on replacing one ambulance and one engine.

President Hayes said fire service calls have remained consistent over the last few years, and asked if those calls are actual fires. Interim Chief Schultz said they are not necessarily fires, but they are calls that require a fire engine to respond. President Hayes asked why the emergency assist calls decreased dramatically in 2020. Division Chief Manthy said that is attributed to the pandemic and hesitancy to have outsiders in your home. He added that they also saw a decrease in transport and emergency medical service calls.

Trustee Canty asked if the Department feels comfortable with recruitment and retention efforts. Interim Chief Schultz said currently there are two openings, and an upcoming retirement will create a third opening. He is confident they will fill those positions, and added that a virtual recruitment effort resulted in 195 potential candidates. He added they are expanding recruitment efforts by soliciting educational institutions, and removing preference points from the application process to increase diversity and inclusion.

Trustee Scaletta mentioned a few years ago the Village purchased electric cots in an effort to reduce paramedic and fire staff injuries. He asked if there is a decrease in injuries since the inception of electric cots. Interim Chief Schultz said he will get back to the Board with a number. Mr. Recklaus added that currently there are only 2 or 3 staff members out on on-duty injury in comparison to prior years when there were 8 or 9. Trustee Scaletta asked why purchase a new ambulance and engine now if we have plenty of both. Interim Chief Schultz said for budgeting purposes and in accordance with industry standards, the useful life of an ambulance is 10 years and 20 years for an engine. He added that they also take into consideration the vehicle's mileage, maintenance history, performance, and replacement part availability to determine its replacement.

In regards to the applicants from the virtual recruitment effort, Trustee Tinaglia asked if those candidates are new to the industry or have prior experience. Interim Chief Schultz said it's a combination of both. State statute requires applicants to be between 21-35 for entry to a municipal fire department. He added that in comparison to the Police Department, Fire does not have the option for transfers between departments, and it would require the applicant to retest.

Trustee Bertucci asked if the 10,000 calls per year noted in the performance measures is accurate. Interim Chief Schultz said that is correct and the calls are divided between the four stations.

Final Recommendation of Committee-of-the-Whole to Board to Trustees for the Property Tax Levy

Trustee Scaletta moved, seconded by Trustee Canty that the Committee-of-the-Whole recommend to the Village Board of Trustees to authorize staff to prepare the Village's and the Arlington Heights Memorial Library's 2021 Tax Levy Ordinance reflecting an estimated total tax levy of \$52,346,922 or 0% increase over the 2020 extended tax levy for the Village and Library portion of the levy.

Final Recommendation of Committee-of-the-Whole to Board of Trustees for the 2022 Budget

Trustee LaBedz moved, seconded by Trustee Tinaglia that the Committee-of-the-Whole recommend to the Village Board of Trustees that the Board approve the Proposed 2022 Budget.

TRUSTEE BERTUCCI MOVED, SECONDED BY TRUSTEE LABEDZ TO ADJOURN THE MEETING AT 9:21 P.M.