

**COMMITTEE-OF-THE-WHOLE
MINUTES OF THE MEETING OF THE PRESIDENT
AND THE BOARD OF TRUSTEES OF
THE VILLAGE OF ARLINGTON HEIGHTS
BOARD ROOM
WEDNESDAY, NOVEMBER 15, 2023
7:00 P.M.**

BOARD MEMBERS PRESENT: Mayor Thomas Hayes, Trustees Bertucci, Dunnington, Grasse, LaBedz, Schwingbeck, Shirley & Tinaglia

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

SUBJECTS:

- A. Staff Follow-up from Previous Meeting
 - B. Review of Department Budgets
 - C. Final Recommendation of Committee-of-the-Whole to Board of Trustees for Property Tax Levy
 - D. Final Recommendation of Committee-of-the-Whole to Board of Trustees for the 2024 Budget
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President Hayes called the meeting to order at 7:00 PM.

Staff Follow-up from Previous Meeting

Mr. Recklaus said there wasn't anything notable from the prior meeting to follow-up on.

Review of Department Budgets – Department Representatives

Boards & Commissions

Mr. Recklaus said the 2024 overall Commissions budget increased \$7,300 from 2023. In regards to Meet Chicago Northwest, he said dues increased \$23,600 based on the 2022 Hotel Tax receipt which can only indicate an increase in visitors to the area. In addition, the Arlington Heights Community Concert Band grant increased by \$2,400. Finally, the Special Events Commission budget decreased due to transferring Harmony Fest funds to Integrated Services.

President Hayes expressed his support for the Arlington Heights Community Concert Band grant increase. He mentioned he met with the director and other leadership and they have requested the support of the Board and Village. They currently have an abundance of performers and have had to turn some away. They have created The Jazz Exchange program to give current members

more opportunities to perform. They also mentioned they are searching for a permanent performance venue within the community.

Trustee Shirley and Trustee LaBedz asked which commission the Arlington Heights Community Concert Band falls under. Mr. Kuehne said it is under the Boards & Commissions Administration section.

Trustee Tinaglia mentioned he previously suggested the construction of a permanent stage structure at Harmony Park funded by sponsors and the like. He asked if staff has had the opportunity to explore the idea. Mr. Recklaus said staff can do research on construction cost. He went on to say that special events have become extremely successful, however it has become more demanding on staff time.

Planning & Community Development

Mr. Perkins mentioned there are many new and exciting projects in the works including 12 active plan commission cases. In 2023, his department welcomed three new staff members, leaving one vacancy. In regards to the budget, he said it is a status quo budget with a 3.9% increase from the prior year. He mentioned that the largest expenditure increases in the General Fund pertains to marketing, trade shows, and specialized software. The Alfresco budget will include the development design and installation of Instagram-able signs and improving gateway signs.

Mr. Perkins went on to discuss the different TIF districts. In regards to TIF V, he highlighted that the fund is thriving and proposed a \$1M surplus distribution in 2024 to the taxing districts on a proportional basis. He mentioned that new signage for the Uptown shopping district was installed in 2023. The next phase to revamp the Uptown Shopping District includes improved pedestrian crosswalks at major intersections, a middle banner on the light posts subject to IDOT approval, and landscaped medians and tree planting. As for TIF IV, Mr. Perkins said the Village will continue to work with Urban Street on their proposed redevelopments. The Hickory/Kensington TIF will begin burying some utility lines on the north end of Kensington Road. Lastly, the South Arlington Heights Road TIF District has budgeted \$1M for sewer improvements.

Trustee Bertucci asked for clarification on the 123% increase in "Other Charges." Mr. Kuehne attributed \$1M to the surplus distribution from TIF V and \$436,000 for CDBG programs.

Trustee Dunnington inquired about the downtown signs and light project. Mr. Perkins said the expenditures are listed in the Arts & Entertainment Fund under the Planning budget.

Trustee Tinaglia asked about the staffing levels in the Planning Department, if there was a need for additional staff and how they are managing workloads during the implementation of the ERP software. Mr. Perkins said recruitment has been a challenge. An offer was extended and accepted for the final open vacancy in the department with a start date in December. He mentioned the Board approved an additional Assistant Planner last year and didn't believe they need additional staffing at the time. Mr. Recklaus added that a few ERP modules would go live at the beginning of the year, and after some optimization he expected things to run smoothly by the first quarter of 2024.

Trustee Shirley asked if TIF V will close after the surplus distribution. Mr. Perkins said the fund will remain open with a positive fund balance to fund the next phase of the Uptown District enhancements.

Public Works

As part of the 2024 budget, Mr. Horne proposed the addition of one full-time Engineering Inspector in the Engineering Division. He said that over the last few years, the Engineering Division has experienced increased demands primarily due to the Village's robust capital improvement program and the everchanging and increasing mandates. This has resulted in overwhelmed and burnt-out staff, inconsistent inspections and plan review comments, frustrated residents and developers, and increased consulting service costs. He said the addition of a full-time Engineering Inspector would improve employee workload and moral, resulting in improved customer service and a reduction in operational costs.

President Hayes, Trustee Bertucci, and Trustee LaBedz thanked Mr. Horne for his presentation and supported the new proposed position.

In regards to the budget, Mr. Papierniak agreed that the addition of a full-time Engineering Inspector would reduce expenditures within the General Fund's contractual services. He anticipated an increase in professional services within the Water & Sewer Fund's water utility operations to accommodate water sampling related to the fifth unregulated contaminant monitoring rule set by the EPA. He mentioned increases are expected in contractual services due to rising labor wages, rebidding of projects once contracts have expired, and higher costs for materials and equipment. In addition, long lead times and parts scarcity continue to be a challenge. In an effort to keep contractual services at a minimum, Public Works has been completing more projects in-house.

Mr. Papierniak said that in 2024, Public Works will continue to balance the long-term capital needs of the parking garages with reduced revenues. He highlighted that in an effort to meet the Board's strategic priority for more green initiatives, 42% of Public Works' fleet is considered alternatively fueled, and in early 2024 they will present to the Board more details on the solar roof for the Public Works building.

Trustee Grasse thanked Mr. Papierniak for his responsible use of Village funds and his efforts to keep costs at a minimum. She expressed her support for the proposed full-time Engineering Inspector position.

Fire

Chief Harris presented the Fire Department's budget. He noted that the budget is a fiscally responsible budget. There is a 5.8% decrease in the annual contribution to Northwest Central Dispatch due to receiving higher 911 surcharge money and the addition of the Village of Barrington. An increase in the JEMS annual membership fee is related to the NWCD's approval of a deputy position to assist with workload. Supply chain issues continue to be problematic. The Village previously ordered a new Ford Expedition for the Battalion Chief and it was delivered

in June. However, due to supply chain issues with the emergency light, the vehicle is not in service. Currently, there are 6 ambulances, 2 engines, and a tower ladder on order. Tentative delivery dates for these vehicles range from June 2024 to May 2027.

Chief Harris introduced the Fifth Ambulance Program to meet the demands of increased call volume and reduce the number of mutual aid responses from neighboring departments. The fifth ambulance would be staffed during peak emergency service request hours which are Monday through Friday, 8:30 a.m. to 4:30 p.m. He mentioned that in 2022, the Fire Department responded to 11,108 service calls making it the highest number of emergency responses in the Department's history. That same year, the Department received mutual aid from neighboring departments 324 times during the peak hours. EMS calls continue to rise, and in an effort to prevent personnel burnout and mental health issues of firefighters and paramedics, Chief Harris said the need for a fifth ambulance is the Department's greatest need. The long-term plan would be to fully fund a 24-hour, 365-day fifth ambulance and hire six additional Firefighter Paramedics to increase service to the community. He explained how staffing of a fifth ambulance would eventually pay for a portion of the increased cost through higher ambulance billing revenues, increased ambulance fees, and reduction in overtime costs.

President Hayes inquired about the supply chain issues to procure emergency vehicles. He asked if it was due to lack of manufacturers throughout the country or unavailability of materials; and if the Department of Labor or Federal Government are getting involved to resolve the issue. Deputy Harris said that during the pandemic obtaining steel and other supply was the challenge, however, the current challenge is the labor shortage. He expressed concern over procurement lead time and questioned whether the technology on emergency vehicles will be outdated by the time the vehicle is received. Mr. Recklaus added that the Village is very fortunate that Public Works does an exceptional job of maintaining Village owned vehicles and apparatuses, and that some ambulance parts may be refurbished.

Trustee Bertucci, Trustee Grasse and Trustee Tinaglia thanked the Department for all they do and supported the fifth ambulance program.

Trustee Dunnington supported the Fifth Ambulance Program and asked if the Department has physical space to accommodate six new staff. Chief Harris said there is room to accommodate the addition of six Firefighter Paramedics. Mr. Recklaus added that realistically there would only be 2 firefighters per shift based on their schedules.

Trustee LaBedz inquired about the service call peak hours, and asked for an update on the turnout gear program. Chief Harris attributed the peak hours to the numerous senior living facilities and doctor's offices in town. Many call requests are for inter-facility transport. However, the Fire Department is also being requested because it is an easier and quicker way to be seen at the emergency room. In regards to the turnout gear, Deputy Chief Hanselman thanked the Board for funding the program. He said there are no supply chain issues and orders are being fulfilled within three months. Within the first year of the program, the Department purchased 60 new sets of gear, and additional sets will be purchased in January 2024. He anticipated that in two years, all EMS personnel will have a second set of gear.

Trustee Shirley praised the enhanced command structure at community events and being proactive about being vigilant and prepared behind the scene. Chief Harris said that for every special event there is an incident action plan involving Public Works, Police, and Fire and everyone working, from the command staff in the vehicle, to the people on the street know who's in charge and who to contact from each department in whatever situation arises.

Resident Keith Moens thanked Village staff and the Board for proposing for the fifth year in a row a 0% increase in the tax levy, a tax abatement and TIF surplus distributions all in one year. He applauded the 40% General Fund surplus and suggested investing surplus monies into speeding infrastructure on Village streets to address the excessive speeding.

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

Trustee Grasse moved, seconded by Trustee Schwingbeck 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 2023 Tax Levy Ordinance reflecting a total tax levy of \$52,871,000 or a 0% increase over the 2022 tax levy for the Village and Library portion of the levy.

Final Recommendation of Committee-of-the-Whole to Board of Trustees for the 2024 Budget

Trustee Tinaglia moved, seconded by Trustee LaBedz that the Committee-of-the-Whole recommend to the Village Board of Trustees that the Board approve the Proposed 2024 Budget as amended through the review process.

TRUSTEE LABEDZ MOVED, SECONDED BY TRUSTEE BERTUCCI TO ADJOURN THE MEETING AT 8:30 P.M.