

ADMINISTRATIVE BUILDING

SEPTEMBER 22, 2015

Chairman Madden called the meeting to order at 8:02 AM. Trustee Mr. Gabram and Mr. Mueller were present. Fiscal Officer Charles Walder and Fire Chief John Frazier were also present.

OHIO CHECKBOOK: Mr. Walder advised the board that representatives from Russell Township were invited to the launch ceremony of OhioCheckbook.com in Columbus. Russell is the first township in Geauga County to register to participate in the program and one of the first 100 in the State of Ohio, so the Treasurer of State's office asked if we would be present during the official launching of the site.

Mr. Gabram made the motion to approve necessary and reasonable expenses, including overnight accommodations for the Fiscal Officer and one Trustee to attend the OhioCheckbook.com launch at the Treasurer of State's office in Columbus on Thursday, September 24, 2015. Mr. Mueller seconded the motion and it passed unanimously.

FIRE BUDGET: Due to the extra personnel added this year, fire salaries have run short. Money was transferred from fire capital accounts to cover employee salaries for the remainder of 2015. Transferring funds from capital accounts to operating accounts increases the amount of cash reserves needed. The township faces a similar issue in 2016. A solution is needed to ensure that the fire department will have sufficient cash reserves going into 2017. Currently it is projected that the fire department will have only 28 days of cash reserves going into 2017 when it should have a minimum of 150 days to maintain a healthy Bond rating.

Chief Frazier said that the fire department had already frozen its capital spending for the balance of 2015, and asked if that is enough. Mr. Walder said that that capital cut was to cover salaries until the end of 2015, and that did not address the salary issue for 2016.

Mr. Mueller said that the fire department needs to put a levy on the ballot next year for collection in 2017. This should make the fire department financially stable. The levy, if passed, would not solve the first quarter 2017 cash reserve issue.

One of the factors to the salaries increasing is the aging population. When a firefighter goes from being on call to attending to a call the rate of pay increases, and the amount of calls the firefighters go on has gone up due to an aging population. The fire department has also had an increase in calls related to Job and Family Services which also increases salary requirements. Due to the high call volume and demand the fire department has been staffing 4 firefighters per shift instead of 3 and this increase was not in the 2016 budget, but there is a demand for the extra person.

One suggested solution was to have a stable salary rate by making more firefighters full time. Having more of the staff fulltime would level out the spikes in salary and would also help with the Affordable Care Act requirements. This would require more money initially but stabilize the spending patterns in the long term.

The Trustees discussed the option of freezing capital accounts through the end of 2016, this will allow money to be moved into salaries to cover them until the end of the year. They trustees decided that a levy will have to be put on the ballot in 2016 since fire can't freeze capital expenditures indefinitely. The trustees agreed to freeze the Fire Departments capital accounts until the end of 2016, with the exception of emergency use needing trustee approval, with the optimistic view that a levy will pass and the department will be stable in 2017. The trustees will

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reevaluate the situation at year end and at next year's budget meeting when creating the 2017 fire budget.

Mr. Gabram made the motion to adjourn. Mr. Mueller seconded and it passed unanimously.

The meeting was adjourned at 9:45 AM.

Justin Madden, Chairman

Charles Walder, Fiscal Officer

Recorded by: J. Dorka