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**Bear Creek Township Special Board Meeting**  
**July 20, 2022**

Called to order at 2:01p.m.

**Roll Call:** Hoffman, Urman, Keiser, Golding, Radatovich

**Click Rd Fire Station**

Keiser explained that this is an opportunity for our board to meet with the architect, as he has not been involved in any of the preliminary meetings. Urman explained that he, Hoffman, and Welsheimer met as a committee and interviewed two architects. When Elaine Keiser was selected, they met with her to give her their ideas. They started with bubble diagrams and ended up with the first schematic floor plan we have today.

Hoffman noted that a few years ago, he and Welsheimer looked at a few fire stations. At the time he met with the architect, he was not sure how much this would cost and had not grasped how expensive building had become. Originally, when he and Welsheimer were looking at stations, he was envisioning a Morton building. Then when they started working with the architect, the discussion was more for a stick built building. The architect worked with the property and configuring how the building would sit. She also looked into building requirements and ventilation, and provided us with initial drawings. Hoffman noted that this has been a good experience for him to learn how much we need and what the cost will be. He thinks we will need to aim for around a \$5 million project rather than the \$11+ million estimate the architect gave us. Hoffman feels that voters do not know how much building costs have increased. He feels that the reality is that we will have to go with a prefab for this project to get the cost down. He feels we should pay the invoice for the architect.

Keiser noted that we need the overall picture and cost estimate. In April, when we received the estimate from the architect, it was a 22,000 sq ft building at \$500/ sq ft. That is where the \$11-13 million estimate came in. Keiser originally thought this would be a \$2-3 million project, but understands that prices have gone up since COVID. The building got bigger than expected and we need to reevaluate. When we looked at Green Lake Township, we started to be open to the idea of a design build.

Welsheimer noted that we started with a list of our needs and the cost kept increasing. However, when we saw that other townships were building fire stations for much less than our estimate, we started to reevaluate.

Urman stated that he, Hoffman, and Welsheimer gave the architect a list of needs and when we received the estimate back, realized we needed to scale back. Some of the things added into the first plan were recommendations from either them or the architect. He was also shocked at the original estimate and thought it would be in the \$7-8 million range. We do not have any numbers for a design build yet. He feels we are close to getting 3D drawings and elevations.

Hoffman thought \$6-7 million would be the highest we could afford. Urman noted that this project may be on delay for a couple years if the cost comes in too high. Hoffman noted that he wants to make sure that if we go with a prebuilt, will the quality be as good? He thinks the voters would accept \$5 million. Urman remarked that maybe we will just build the fire station portion and do something else for elections in a few years.

Elaine Keiser noted that these are all great comments. When she starts a project with preliminary design, she starts by determining the needs and goes into the space planning questionnaire and spreadsheet. Regardless of what direction the board chooses to go, the preliminary work that was done will hold true. She split the building into different components using a bubble diagram. These diagrams show how different portions of the building support one another. She worked to group plumbing fixtures together and achieve privacy for the fire department as well as the ability for the public facilities to be open. Going forward, we can take different components out. This design is similar to a puzzle. There are many different pieces and the time it takes to put together is incredible. Moving ahead, the board has information about the needs of the township. She designed the building so that each piece could almost stand alone, keeping the fire department at one end and the public at the other end. Her first objective was to complete a site analysis, which they did with colored sketches and renderings. She determined how the site would flow with the public, and also with employees at the hall. She looked at the best way to lay out the parking lot, which involved an occupancy calculations, so that she would know how many cars. She looked at utilities, as far as where the well and septic will go. The extra costs get attributed to the \$400/sq ft building. Even if we scale back on this plan, there is still room to grow. The conclusion is that she estimates \$400-500/sq ft. Residential buildings are \$500-600/sq ft. Commercial buildings have components that are unique to this building. She wanted to price it in such a way that everything was included and nothing was left out. Before she starts working on a rendering, we need to discuss the range for the look of the building. When she was working with Welsheimer, Hoffman, and Urman, they talked about this being a "statement piece". She is planning for a building for 50 year standards rather than 30 year. This is proposed to be a 1.1 grade facility because of how the code views this type of building. It appears that we have overshot the amount of building the township can afford to build. This pricing is based on where the market is currently. She uses this process with all clients and feels this seems to be a good mix.

Keiser asked what phase we are in, and how much we have left to do of schematic design? Elaine Keiser clarified that we are well into schematic design. Currently, she has not prepared the 3D model and has not defined the building framing and foundation system. She did prepare a cost estimate to test where we are at. Traditionally, at this point, we would go back and forth with floor plan and cost, to

discover what would happen if different areas were made smaller. These are things that can “move the needle”. She worked to recognize things that often get missed until later on, so she put an allowance on those items, such as fire railroad access. We have lots of parking areas and heavy duty driveways. The cost is currently high for asphalt drives and reinforced concrete. The landscaping is also an area that often gets forgotten. Keiser noted that the property is a non-commercial area, and we are looking for a building that would blend into the environment. It does not have to be a statement building, just something that will fit into the neighborhood. Radatovich was imagining more of a middle of the road building, not a statement building. Elaine Keiser noted that we will need to discuss the exterior material as well as rooflines and public entryways. She was not envisioning something extravagant. Urman noted that the board may be misunderstanding “statement building”. When he, Hoffman, and Welsheimer spoke with the architect, they “did not want the taj mahal and didn’t want a pole barn” The want it to look nice, not super high or low end. The architect was told that the board wants this building to blend into the neighborhood.

Radatovich noted that Elaine Keiser did everything that was asked of her, and has provided us with background information we can use going forward. However, it is our responsibility to look at all options to find the best fit for the township, which is why we are looking into the possibility of a design build.

Hoffman noted that when they met with the architect, they discussed how the building would look from the roadway. Keiser noted he was imagining the building being broken up a bit and different heights. He noted that we are in the schematic design phase, and budget wise, we are not quite at halfway. Elaine Keiser noted that this proposal was for hourly billing. This work is deductible from a full contract and it takes time to complete renderings. Is this site plan something the board would like to see brought to life? Or are we interested in a smaller idea? She could also take a budget and reverse engineer a building based on what we can afford. She could tell us what we could build with a certain budget. Keiser asked if the \$500/sq ft is accurate? With that budget, we could only build a 10,000 sq ft building, which will not work for us. We would have to wait a couple years to see if the prices go up or down. Hoffman things we should look at a prefab, as it will likely cost less.

Keiser explained that he, Welsheimer, and Radatovich met with Ironwood to get a proposal and plan back based on our needs. If their pricing is different, we will need to compare what we are getting at two different prices per square foot. Urman noted that we hired an architect to help give us some of those answers. Keiser noted that if this fire hall is going to cost us \$11 million, then there is no point in going forward. On the other hand, if we can only afford a 10,000 sq ft building, then that would not be a useful building.

Hoffman asked if we would want to consider just building the fire department side? Keiser noted that that is a different discussion entirely. Urman noted that the board has the site plan from Elaine Keiser. There are things on the plan that we can shave off if needed.

Radatovich feels it is not wise to make a decision today. She thinks we should get the design build estimates before we move forward. Keiser asked if we pay the open invoice, if we will be completely paid up. Elaine Keiser confirmed that. Hoffman agreed that we should wait for design build estimates.

There was no public comment.

**Motion** by Urman to pay Elaine Keiser \$16,625 for the open invoice. 2<sup>nd</sup> by Hoffman.

**Passed**

Elaine Keiser noted that it is difficult to estimate the cost per square foot. She relies on people within the industry to help her with that. Urman feels we need to get an idea of cost before we go to voters. To give Elaine Keiser direction, we are on pause at this time. If we were to want elevations for this floor plan, how far out would we be? Elaine Keiser noted we are about 4 weeks out and the same number of hours as the last bill. Keiser asked if we reduce the floor plan, if we would have to start over. We would not. Hoffman asked if Elaine Keiser had ever worked with anyone where a Morton building is used. If we go forward with a design build, can the rest of the site work that the architect prepared still be used? Elaine Keiser noted that she can take a pre-engineered building and her sketch and merge it together. However, often times, she noted that pre-engineered buildings come from other states that do not understand our snow load. Urman shared an example of someone he knows who purchased a prebuilt pole barn and the snow load wasn’t enough.

**Other Business:** None

**Public Comment:** None

**Adjournment:** 2:53p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

*Emma Radatovich*

Emma Radatovich, Bear Creek Township Clerk