

1
**Bear Creek Township Board Meeting
March 8, 2023**

Called to order at 7:00 p.m.

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

Motion by Golding to appoint Radatovich as chair of the meeting. 2nd by Hoffman.

Passed

Pledge of Allegiance

Approval of Minutes: Regular mtg of Feb 1, 2023, special mtg of Feb 1, Feb 9, Feb 15, and Feb 23, 2023, and closed session mtg of Feb 1, and Feb 15, 2023.

Motion by Hoffman to approve the minutes as presented. 2nd by Golding.

Passed

Budget Public Hearing

Motion by Hoffman to open the public hearing for the budget. 2nd by Golding.

Passed

Time: 7:05pm

Radatovich reviewed the proposed 23/24 budget. For the general fund, the estimated revenue is \$2.1 million (in round numbers), and the estimated expense is \$2.8 million, leaving us with a net loss of \$731,194. The reason for this loss is two fold: one reason is that we did not spend much on roads this year, so there is almost two years worth of road improvements in this budget. The second reason is that this budget includes the spending of our ARPA funds. If you look at the last three years, in 21/22 our fund balance was \$4.4 million and at the end of this proposed year the fund balance will be \$5.1 million. So even with the additional expenses this year, we are still moving in the right direction. The end fund balance for the end of this year is \$5,065,177.96. For the fire fund, the estimated revenue is \$373,500 and the estimated expense is \$280,000, leaving us with a net gain of \$93,500 and an end fund balance of \$1.3 million. For the liquor fund, the estimated revenue is \$14,500 and estimated expense is \$4,900, leaving us with a net gain of \$9,600 and an end fund balance of \$234,749.11. For the street lighting fund, the estimated revenue is \$10,000 and estimated expense is \$7,600, leaving us with a net gain of \$2,400 and an end fund balance of \$20,009.78. For the building department, the estimated revenue is \$250,000 and the estimated expense is \$229,792, leaving us with a net gain of \$20,208 and an end fund balance of \$472,584.87. For the library fund, this is a disbursement account, so all the money that comes in is distributed to the library. The estimated revenue and expense is \$210,000. For the RBCFD, the estimated revenue is \$377,330 and the estimated expense is \$414,370, leaving us with a net loss of \$37,040 and an end fund balance of \$419,586.45. For the sewer fund, the estimated revenue is \$1.4 million and the estimated expense is \$2.1 million, leaving us with a net loss of \$665,700 and an end fund balance of \$3.1 million. The township is doing some major upgrades to our sewer infrastructure this year, which accounts for the high costs. For the total of all funds, the estimated revenue is \$4.7 million and the estimated expenses is \$6.1 million, leaving us with a net loss of \$1.3 million. The township is incurring extra expenses this year due to the extra money spent in roads (that was not spent last year), the spending of the ARPA money, the major sewer upgrades, as well as the property purchase for the sewer upgrades. The three year trend still shows the township moving in a positive direction, with a 21/22 fund balance of \$9.9 million and a 23/24 fund balance of \$10.7 million. Our fund balance at the end of this fiscal year is proposed to be \$10,695,782.32.

Karla Buckmaster asked about the ARPA funding. Radatovich noted that the township has already allocated some of the ARPA funds to sewer upgrades, but has not allocated the rest of the money. The funds need to be allocated by the end of 2024 and spent by the end of 2026.

Motion by Golding to end the public hearing for the budget. 2nd by Hoffman.

Passed

Time: 7:10pm

Request from the Floor/Discussion

Karla Buckmaster noted that the township taxpayers pay into the Greenwood Cemetery millage. The cemetery board is meeting on Friday to discuss the budget and the millage. Additionally, in regards to the discussion for the flashing light at Lears/Howard, she noted that the trees and the snowbanks cause more of a sight distance issue. Those are bigger issues in her opinion than a flashing light.

Approval of the Agenda

Radatovich noted that we will need to make budget amendments before we approve the 23/24 budget.

Unfinished Business

Roads

Radatovich noted that frost laws went on 3/7/23.

Click Rd Property- Design Build

Radatovich shared that the board met with the architect a few times to review details of the building and room sizes. We are on schedule to have an estimated cost of the building and land improvements sometime in May.

Sewer Lift Station #2 Upgrades

Radatovich noted that the design of the station have been sent to EGLT for review, and we should hear back by mid-April.

Cell Phone Booster

Radatovich explained that we have ordered the antenna for the cell phone booster, but it arrive damaged. We are waiting for the new one to arrive.

Employee Handbook

Radatovich shared that at last month's meeting we discussed a few updates to the employee handbook. These updates include: the current office hours, modifying the health care/benefit section to reflect current practices, adding the assessor's assistant, adding a half day off on Good Friday, and allowing one week of vacation to be carried over. We will need to adopt this new handbook.

Motion by Hoffman to adopt the updated employee handbook. 2nd by Golding.

Passed

New Business

22/23 Budget Amendments

Radatovich noted that we have some budget amendments: \$3,000 to the library, \$8,750 to the general fund, \$10,000 to parks and recreation, \$100 to liquor fund, \$6,600 to the building department, and \$66,460 to RBCFD (pending fire board approval).

Motion by Golding to amend the budget for \$3,000 to the library, \$8,750 to the general fund, \$10,000 to parks and recreation, \$100 to liquor fund, \$6,600 to the building department, and \$66,460 to RBCFD (pending fire board approval). 2nd by Hoffman.

Passed

Adopt Budget 2023/24

Radatovich explained that we created the budget for 23/24 over the last few months and held the public hearing tonight. We will need to adopt the 23/24 budget.

Motion by Golding to adopt the 23/24 budget. 2nd by Hoffman.

Passed

Employee Raises

Radatovich explained that we set the employee raises in an earlier budget meeting, but now need to approve them. These wages will be effective April 1st. The proposed wages are as follows: Deputy Clerk/Secretary \$23/hr, Deputy Treasurer \$19/hr, Building Inspector \$68,000, Electrical Inspector \$42.50/hr and \$40/inspection, Sewer Meter Reader \$500/quarter, Blight \$25/hr, Liquor \$4,000, Election Workers \$20/hr, Secretarial Assistant (Sally) \$20/hr, Per Diems: Planning Commission \$85/meeting, Planning Commission Chair \$110/meeting, Zoning Administrator \$125/meeting, Parks and Recreation Chair \$90/meeting, Parks and Recreation Secretary \$90/meeting, All Others Boards/Per Diems \$70/meeting, Fire Chief \$90,000, Deputy Fire Chief \$11,000, and Firefighters \$21/hr.

Motion by Golding to approve the following employee wage adjustments, effective April 1st: Deputy Clerk/Secretary \$23/hr, Deputy Treasurer \$19/hr, Building Inspector \$68,000, Electrical Inspector \$42.50/hr and \$40/inspection, Sewer Meter Reader \$500/quarter, Blight \$25/hr, Liquor \$4,000, Election Workers \$20/hr, Secretarial Assistant (Sally) \$20/hr, Per Diems: Planning Commission \$85/meeting, Planning Commission Chair \$110/meeting, Zoning Administrator \$125/meeting, Parks and Recreation Chair \$90/meeting, Parks and Recreation Secretary \$90/meeting, All Others Boards/Per Diems \$70/meeting, Fire Chief \$90,000, Deputy Fire Chief \$11,000, and Firefighters \$21/hr. 2nd by Hoffman.

Passed

Merit

Radatovich explained that we reached out to Merit about providing internet access. We currently have Charter and Merit is a government/school provider. Radatovich shared an estimate to hook up and the monthly cost. The board agreed that the cost is too high to pursue this at this time.

Traffic Light- Howard/Lears

Radatovich read a memo from Keiser regarding this issue. In his memo, Keiser shared that the intersection of Howard and Lears is very busy, and he was looking into the possibility of having a blinking light installed. He reached out to the tribe to see if they would contribute and they cannot. Then he asked the Harbor Springs Area Community Foundation for a grant and they do not participate in road projects. The cost would be \$7,200 if we wanted to do it ourselves.

Hoffman noted that these has been accidents there. He wondered if you would be able to see the light in time if you were coming from the south.

Brian Gutowski noted that if the light was installed, it would be easier to make the argument to the state police to lower the speed limit to 45mph.

Radatovich agreed that the issue is not only the speed, but is also the sight distance. While this blinking light is not the perfect solution, it is a better solution than what we have now.

Motion by Golding to spend up to \$7,200 to install a blinking light at Lears/Howard Rd. 2nd by Hoffman.

Passed

Assessor Report

Radatovich read Keiser's assessor's report. In his report, Keiser explained that the assessment notices were very difficult this year, as assessment is going up as high as 40% in some neighborhoods. The CPI this year was 7.9% but Proposal A caps the CPI at 5%. Typically we see a 2-3% increase in taxable value and this year it will be 5% which is the highest it has been since 1995. Keiser believes this year will be a busy year for board of review. This is also the year that all units in Emmet County will be audited by the state. Keiser appreciates the board's consideration of hiring an assessing assistant.

Vehicle Purchase

Radatovich explained that we recently purchased a new truck for the fire chief and reoutfitted the old vehicle to be used for the deputy fire chief. Conklin has also been using this vehicle for building inspections. Because Bear Creek uses this vehicle more than Resort, it would be fair for us to buy Resort's half of the vehicle. Kring's believes that the fair market value of the vehicle is \$21,400-23,800. If we split the difference (\$22,600) we could pay Resort \$11,300 for their half of the vehicle.

Motion by Golding to purchase the remaining half of the deputy fire chief's vehicle for \$11,300. 2nd by Hoffman.

Passed

Commissioner's Report- Brian Gutowski

Gutowski shared that they hired the entertainers for the country concert for the fair this year. They have the monster truck lined up for this year as well. The horse show has been moved to the end of July. As far as DPW is concerned, the price of cardboard is bad right now, but they are doing well overall. Parks and Recreation had a public hearing Monday night for a DNR trust grant for cabins at Camp Petosega. They are also out for bid to replace the computer for dispatch.

Hoffman asked about DPW equipment. Gutowski shared that they ordered a new truck.

Planning and Zoning Report

Radatovich shared that the first case, Case PSUP22-027 Lonny Beyer, SPECIAL USE PERMIT- Contractor's Use, 4933 E Bear River Rd, was approved. The second case, Case PREZN22-05 David Hoffman, REZONING, FF-1 Farm and Forest to I-1 Light Industrial, 01-16-25-100-010, was approved. The third case, Case PSPR23-001 Jason Kishmish for Grand Management and Development, SITE PLAN REVIEW- Retail Business, 2128 US 131 Hwy, has some history to it. Last year, the Bear Creek Township Planning Commission denied this applicant for a very similar site plan. The applicant returned this month for a very similar site plan. The main differences are as follows: 1) The property has now been split, but both parcels are still owned by the Flynns. 2) The proposed access to Anderson Rd has been removed on the new site plan. This month, a motion for denial failed in a 2-3 vote and a motion for approval was then recommended by a 3-2 vote. Two planning commissioners were absent. The Planning Commission did not review the interior of the site plan at the meeting. Rather, the only discussion was regarding the access. Additionally, there were some reports that were provided right before the meeting, and the Planning Commission and applicants didn't have much time to review them. Radatovich noted that there may also be some logistical issues with delivery trucks driving north and wanting to make a left into the site, and then needing to find a location to turn around. The fourth case, Case PSUP23-003 Theodore Tamm, SPECIAL USE PERMIT, Home Occupation- Commercial Kitchen/Catering, 2853 Wessinger, was approved. Tamm explained a map showing which neighbors were in support and which were opposed. Radatovich shared that there were two administrative plans, the first for Goodwill and the second for Culvers.

Motion by Golding to approve Case PSUP22-027, Case PREZN22-05, and Case PSUP23-003, and to send Case PSPR23-001 back to the Planning Commission, in order that the Planning Commission review the interior of the site plan, as well as to give the Planning Commission and applicant time to review the reports that came in just before the Planning Commission meeting. 2nd by Hoffman.

Passed

Fire Department Report

Welsheimer noted that they did some training on incident command and watched a video on electric vehicles. There were 22 fire calls and they installed 12 smoke detectors and 2 CO alarms. They did a fire prevention training with 16 kids at a local church.

Parks and Recreation Report

Radatovich explained that we had a public hearing at the beginning of this meeting to discuss plans to upgrade Spring Lake Park. The township is looking to apply for a trust grant through the DNR. The following items would be upgraded: the bathhouse would be redone, the roof on the bathhouse and pavilion would be replaced, the railing would be redone with a portion lowered for accessibility, some trails would be paved for accessibility; we would also be adding more parking as well as adding a pollinator garden. The application is due to the DNR April 1st, so if the board decides to pursue this, we will need to make a resolution tonight. Radatovich shared that we have two resolution options, one to include the cost of the pollinator garden and one without.

Hoffman asked about maintenance on the pollinator garden. Knutsen noted that it is an upfront cost, as the first few years it will need to be weeded. But then it should begin to become self-sustaining.

Radatovich asked for public comment or input on this plan.

Karla Buckmaster asked what the advantage is to the pollinator garden and asked for the estimated cost breakdown. Maureen Doull is on the parks and recreation committee and noted that some of the mowing costs will go away if the garden is installed. Knutsen noted that

the garden will help with insect and butterfly migration, as well as helping to clean the stormwater before it runs to the lake. A resident asked about the square footage of the garden. Knutsen shared that it costs \$70/sq yd for the pollinator garden. Knutsen reviewed the cost breakdown.

Buckmaster asked about cleaning up the trails towards the highway. Hoffman noted that we applied for a grant for that a few years ago but it was denied.

Dave Hoffman asked if you could put some parallel parking spots along the front. Hoffman noted that the state owns a little way into the front with the right of way and it would also disrupt the aesthetics of the park.

Buckmaster asked about the bathroom improvements. Knutsen reviewed the plans for the bathhouse.

Motion by Hoffman to make a resolution to support the submission of a MDNR Trust Fund Grant Application for Spring Lake Park Architectural and Access Improvements. 2nd by Golding.

Roll Call: Hoffman, Golding, Radatovich

Yes: Hoffman, Golding, Radatovich

Absent: Urman, Keiser

Passed

Correspondence

Radatovich read a letter from residents of Bear Creek Twp regarding the library dated 1/16/23.

Clerk's Business/Bills- Report by Radatovich

Radatovich reported bills in the amount of \$201,579.15.

Motion by Hoffman to pay the bills in the amount of \$201,579.15. 2nd by Golding.

Passed

Treasurer's Report- Report by Golding

The Treasurer's Report shows a balance of \$11,009,261.72 as of 2/28/23.

Building Department Report

Golding shared building department reports as of February 28th.

Sewer Business/Bills

Radatovich reported bills for the township sewer in the amount of \$184,389.52.

Motion by Radatovich to pay the township sewer bills in the amount of \$184,389.52. 2nd by Hoffman.

Passed

There is one pending sewer service permit application this month for Goodwill at 2154 Anderson Rd, for 4 REUs.

Motion by Golding to accept the sewer service permit application for Goodwill at 2154 Anderson Rd for 4 REUs. 2nd by Hoffman.

Passed

Request from the Floor/Discussion: None

Other Business: None

Adjournment: 8:10p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Emma Radatovich

Emma Radatovich, Bear Creek Township Clerk