

Walker Township Board of Supervisors

Minutes of January 25, 2024

Budget Work session

The Walker Township Board of Supervisors held a special budget work session on Thursday, January 25, 2024, at the Township office. This meeting was called to order by Chairman Joseph Harford at 6:00 p.m.

Present: Joe Harford, Chairman, Board of Supervisors; James Morris; Matt Johnson; Kirk States and Julie Johns

Guests Present: Melanie Norris, Donald & Kimberly Spickler, Dale Myers, Sandra Kleckner, Jesse Leonard, Scott Merrell, Carl Lynn, William Leidy, Donald Hindman, Tim Furlong, John Harris, Chris Linn, Andrew Stanger, Jonathan Webber, Ben Webber, Belinda Morris, Susan Himes, Ryan Fisher, Kim Myers & Mike Lang

Public Comment on Agenda Items: None

Budget Questions:

Joe started the budget meeting by explaining that this was just a work session to take a fresh look at the 2024 budget that was adopted in December of 2023. It is the ability of an incoming Supervisor to request to reopen the budget so that they can participate in the decision-making process. A motion was made at the January 16th meeting to reopen the budget, and this meeting is set to answer questions regarding the budget. Joe hit the high points of the budget – what incomes and expenses are anticipated, then opened up the floor for questions.

The real estate tax was discussed. It will cover the expenses for both phase 1 and 2 of the building project. This money will be collected by the tax collector and turned over to the Township. It will be placed in a separate account and the monthly payments will be paid from this account.

Belinda Morris had a question about the auditors, when they meet, is the meeting open, is the audit open? The audit is planned for February 19th, and the short business meeting at the start of the day would be open to the public, but the audit itself is not open to the public.

Mike Lang asked if the Supervisors could give a cost for the new building – separate from the entire project. The answer was that they didn't have that breakdown – the project was bid together will all work combined.

The park budget numbers were explained. Also discussed the original budget for the park being the franchise fee from Comcast, but now that money is part of operating budget and the Supervisors decide what amount to budget annually.

Mike Lang asked if the Supervisors intended to bid the engineering work out for phase 2. The answer was that the engineer was already contracted for the entire project.

Kim Myers asked who was monitoring the camera that was at the new building and asked why all the lights were on from dusk to dawn. He felt that they should be on motion sensors to save money. The camera was the property of the contractor, put there to protect his equipment, and when they left, they took the camera with them. The lights are on for security reasons.

Kim also asked why, with the huge cost of the building, we didn't have the inside redone at the same time. He was told that we chose not to bid things that we could do ourselves after the contractors were

finished to save money. Everything that is bid has to be paid prevailing wage rates, Our employees were capable of doing the work that still needs to be done at a much lower rate.

Kim Myers cautioned that we should make sure that we get a warranty on the concrete work that Mt. Union Lumber is going to be doing for the maintenance garage.

The budget figures for roadwork were questioned. There has been a grant application submitted for Orchard Rd, and the figures anticipate that we will get the grant, and that we will spend the grant money plus \$20,000 that we are using as matching funds. If we don't get the grant, the project will not happen, so no expense either. Ryan Fisher asked if the Supervisors have considered just vacating the road and turning it back over to the bordering landowners. Would save everyone money.

Andrew Stanger introduced himself as the pastor of the Bible Missionary Church, and expressed concern that the Supervisors were moving too fast for the building project. Joe explained to him that this was not a new subject, and that in fact, they have been discussing these buildings for over 10 years, and they have been making responsible financial plans for this project since 2020.

Jonathan Webber said he cannot figure out how we think the Township will continue to grow, and why we need a new building. The population is at a standstill and there are no new developments planned. He was concerned that the Boards thought that the farmers would start selling their ground, and for Mr. Kyper, that was not going to be the case.

Belinda Morris questioned the grant money for the building project. Why can't the township use that money for what they've already done? Julie explained that the application process has lots of requirements that have to be met, and they have to approve the project before it can begin. We haven't finalized our plans, so they haven't been submitted to the grant board yet. That has to happen, and they have to have the opportunity to request any changes they see fit prior to the project starting. That would not fit with financing an already completed project. We chose to do the project in phases so that we could get started on phase 1 and be working towards phase 2 and the grant funds at a later date.

Public Comment on non-agenda items:

Melanie Norris questioned the reimbursements from the Authority to the Township for payroll. Julie explained that the Authority does not have payroll. They reimburse the Township for the hours that are spent working on Authority projects. They also reimburse the Township for operating expenses. Both are done monthly.

Adjournment:

There being no further business, the meeting was adjourned at 7:25 PM by Chairman Harford.

Respectfully submitted,

Julie Johns,
Secretary/Treasurer