

Minutes from the Budget Hearing Meeting of February 25, 2025

CALL TO ORDER: Supervisor Cooley called to order at 6:05 pm

PLEDGE: Pledge was recited

ROLL CALL: Cooley, present; Holbrook, present; Mead, present; Wilso, present.

Purchase, absent& excused

AGENDA: Wilson moved and Cooley supported to accept the agenda as presented.

PUBLIC COMMENT: None

Trustee Mead arrived at 6:13 pm.

**BUSINESS:**

**BUDGET DISCUSSION:** The 2025/2026 pay schedule was the first item addressed. After a review of the cost of living multipliers, the salary study through Michigan Townships Association and a review of neighboring local Townships, it was determined that a pay increase of 8% for the majority of the Township officials, appointed staff and employees was warranted. It was noted that the fire department would be reviewed separately in accordance with the Fire Chief's recommendations. Specific positions within the Township required individual attention. It was determined that the trustees' wages should be weighted to place more value in attendance at the meetings vs monthly salary. It was noted that recording secretaries should not be afforded the same meeting rate as the committee members.

The janitors' rate was clarified to be a contract service with an average monthly rate of and an additional hourly rate for any cleaning time in excess of 3 hours. The zoning contract rate was included in the pay rate field. Per meeting rates were increased slightly. The Board received an explanation as to training rates for non-hourly positions. The matched funds for the Road fund have increased greatly from 2024/25 to 2025/26 in hopes of accomplishing some major improvements.

Fire Chief Markey presented the fire department wage recommendations with a new position of Emergency Services Director while other positions were eliminated. The Board accepted the figures as presented. The Fire Protection Agreement with Platte Township was discussed and is noted in the fire budget.

The budget was then thoroughly reviewed on a line-item basis for each fund. It was recommended that several general fund categories be removed, a few items were amended as far as the recommended dollar amounts for 2025/2026. The property tax revenue will be reviewed with the assessor to verify potential revenue. The PTAF calculation will be verified by the Supervisor and Treasurer prior to the adoption of the budget. A new record management position was added under the Township Board. The deputy clerk salary limit was increased slightly to allow for additional hours needed in the event of an election in 2025. Professional services for the Parks and Rec fund was increased due to restructuring some of the maintenance and grounds services.

**CIP DISCUSSION:** The Capital Improvements Plan 2023-29 was reviewed. It was determined that more time needed to be devoted to the plan and that it might be wise to have the planning commission

review it and that a parks and rec committee might be needed to provide adequate attention to the plan.

**CONTRACTS:**

**PARKS:** As mentioned in the budget review, there will be some restructuring as to grounds maintenance, mowing, etc, that be will done through contracts rather than as an employment position with the Township.

**ZONING:** MR Consulting as presented a renewal contract for 2025/2026 with an option for renewal for 2027. The monthly rate would remain the same as the 204/2025 rate.

**LIBRARY:** The Benzonia Township Library has asked for a contribution for the 2025/2026 year. The current budget proposal includes an amount that some of the Board members feel is too high. Two of the Board members felt that an increase from last year's contribution was acceptable but that the Board should vote as a whole as to what the actual amount should be.

**ROAD PROJECTS:** As noted in the budget review, the matched funds proposed for the 2025/2026 year. The Township will work closely with the Benzie County Road Commission to be sure funds are located where they are needed most.

The final budget will be presented at the March 12, 2025 regular meeting of the Homestead Township Board.

**PUBLIC COMMENT:** None

Meeting adjourned at 8:38 pm as moved by Cooley, supported by Holbrook All ayes, motion carried

Final Minutes for the Budget Hearing of February 25, 2025 as approved on March 12, 2025 at the regular meeting of the Homestead Township Board of Trustees.