

**Sangamon Township
Special Meeting Minutes**

Held at Sangamon Township Building, 1264 Old Rt 47 White Heath, Illinois

March 21, 2019

The special meeting of Sangamon Township was called to order at 7:00 p.m. by Supervisor Kathleen Piatt. Roll Call was taken. Present were Supervisor Kathleen Piatt, Trustee Mike Nolan, Trustee John Foley, Trustee Bill Olson and Trustee Bill Blickhan.

Also present were Kevin Duff, Clerk.

The pledge of allegiance was recited.

Public Comment: No public comment was made.

New Business:

Supervisor Piatt distributed copies of the Final Budget and Appropriation 2019 for discussion and read the changes suggested at the regular township meeting on March 14, 2019:

- *lower accounting services to reflect the change in firms to \$6k;
- *increase legal services to \$3k to reflect recent FOIA's;
- *increase building maintenance to \$3k to cover potential roof issues;
- *change building and equipment to \$2k;
- *leave the Town budget for land acquisition at \$40k;
- *increase the Park budget for land acquisition to \$35k;
- *reduce the general assistance budget.

Trustee Blickhan noted the changes in the Park budget are shown on the bottom of page 8 of the Town funds page.

Trustee Olson noted that the budget was tight with a surplus of only about \$232.

Trustee Blickhan confirmed that the Board approves all invoices even what is spent anonymously from general assistance fund. He also asked if the budget reflected half of the Highway Commissioner's salary coming from Town funds and half from Road & Bridge funds.

Trustee Foley noted that the Highway Commissioner's salary split is shown on page 2 of the Town budget and page 2 of the Road & Bridge budget. He also pointed out that on page 5 total funds available are about \$259k while total estimated expenses are \$325k.

Supervisor Piatt replied that the expenditures are a ceiling on what can be spent if needed but are not required to be spent. She noted that the Board can adjust the budget during the year but must be done at a special meeting.

Trustee Blickhan noted that budgeting a ceiling makes it difficult to get a handle on where the budget is during the year.

Trustee Olson noted that the Township can not spend if the money isn't budgeted.

Supervisor Piatt noted that the budget anticipates the worst case scenario.

Trustee Foley understood why the budget is created greater than funds available but that makes the budget not a good working document. Kelly's accounting statements are more meaningful.

Supervisor Piatt noted that all of the townships in Piatt County budget the way Sangamon does and confirmed that the final budget is filed for public view at the courthouse.

Trustee Nolan noted that we will also publish the final budget when approved on the Township's website.

Trustee Blickhan believes that the Board should continue to strive to improve the budget process to be less confusing and more telling.

Trustee Nolan asked if the Board is saying that the budget needs to be more accurate and that we need to give the budget to Kelly's accounting to compare to profit and loss statements.

Trustee Foley noted that we have two good working documents: the prior year's profit and loss statements and what the audit shows the account balances to be.

Trustee Blickhan asked how the Board knows what can be levied based on the budget.

Supervisor Piatt replied that levies are made for the Township's general fund, general assistance fund, park and insurance fund based on past levies. The numbers can be adjusted within given limits.

Trustee Blickhan noted that he does not understand the assessing process.

Trustee Nolan noted that the 6% multiplier is required by the County.

Trustee Foley is going to call former assessor Brent Buckalew to get an explanation and will report back to the Board. John stated that he understands that even if assessed values go up, the Township has levied for a set dollar amount so the value may go up but the bottom line stays the same.

Supervisor Piatt replied that the Board reduced some of the levies to reflect surpluses and increase some levies where funds are needed.

Trustee Olson noted on page 9 of the budget that the balance for general assistance is about \$82k.

Trustee Foley replied that that balance is likely to grow. Page 6 shows a spend of \$78k but the Township hasn't historically spent that much in a year.

Trustee Blickhan noted that since the budget amount is a ceiling, not having the money in the budget could wipe out the fund in a bad year.

Trustee Blickhan made a motion to approve the Town budget and appropriation 2019 and was seconded by Trustee Foley. A roll call vote was taken and the motion passed unanimously.

Trustee Nolan made a motion to approve the Road & Bridge budget and appropriation 2019 and seconded by Trustee Foley. A roll call vote was taken and the motion passed unanimously.

The budgets and resolutions were signed.

Trustee Foley introduced a new item for discussion about having met with Steve Harper about some properties in White Heath that are eyesores.

Supervisor Piatt reminded the Board that the Township has a item in the budget for clean up funds.

Trustee Blickhan asked if the property owners of the eyesore properties have paid the property taxes.

Trustee Nolan stated that Mr. Harper says that the taxes are being paid.

Trustee Blickhan noted if there are no ordinances in place regulating property upkeep, the Township would have to buy the eyesore properties and tear them down.

Supervisor Piatt noted that the County has ordinances mentioning nuisance properties harboring rodents.

Trustee Nolan thought the properties might have to be condemned.

Trustee Blickhan wondered if perhaps the properties might be acquired for a nominal amount.

Trustee Foley reminded the Board of an abandoned property in Hickory Hills Subdivision.

Trustee Nolan stated that the Hickory Hills subdivision doesn't have covenants about nuisance properties.

Trustee Blickhan stated that the Township needs legal remedies and might have to go to court to force the property owners to clean up their properties.

Trustee Nolan stated that when Mr. Harper went to the County, the County would not take action. He suggested that perhaps the Township might ask or pressure the County to act.

Trustee Foley thought there are maybe three courses of action for the Township: acquire if delinquent taxes, buy at a nominal amount or take a Township vote to ask the County to act and enforce their ordinances. Trustee Nolan wondered if the Board might be ahead of the public and if the public wants the Township to pursue. Could the question be put on the ballot?

Supervisor Piatt wondered if the website or a mailer could be used to ask the question.

Trustee Blickhan asked if the Board needed to know what they could do before the question was asked.

Trustee Nolan asked if we know what other townships have done. If no one complains, no one can do anything.

Trustee Olson asked if the brick apartments next to the old bus barn are occupied.

Supervisor Piatt replied that the Township has recently paid the rent for one apartment from general assistance. She noted that the discussion has been good but sounds like the Township is limited on what can be done.

Trustee Nolan thought he could ask attorney Dana Rhoades for his opinion on what the Township can do without the Township being charged.

Trustee Foley asked if we have copies of other township ordinances.

Trustee Nolan said we can explore on line what other townships have.

In accordance with the exemption to the Open Meeting Act that authorizes the Board to go into closed session 5ILCS 120/C5, a motion was made by Trustee Blickhan and seconded by Supervisor Piatt to go into closed session at 7:52 p.m. A voice vote was taken and approved unanimously. Closed session began at 7:52.

A voice vote was taken to resume the regular meeting and the meeting resumed at 8:45. A motion to adjourn was made by Trustee Blickhan and seconded by Trustee Nolan. All were in favor. The meeting adjourned at 8:45.

Respectfully submitted,

Kevin Duff
Sangamon Township Clerk