
MINUTES OF SYMMES TOWNSHIP WORK SESSION

AUGUST 13, 2019

The meeting was called to order at 6:00 p.m. Elected officials present were: Mr. Phil Beck, Ms. Jodie Leis, and Mr. Kenneth Bryant.

Also present: Kim Lapensee – Administrator.

Carol Sims was absent.

OLD BUSINESS

None.

NEW BUSINESS

1. Proposed Police Contract Increases. Mrs. Lapensee stated that she would like to start with our proposed contract. She stated that she put together a spreadsheet comparing the costs with our current contract 2016 – 2020 and what is proposed for 2020 – 2022. She stated that she also gave the board numbers for Sycamore, Silverton and Anderson Township so we could compare the costs. Ms. Leis stated that she thought we would all be charged the same amount from now going forward. Mrs. Lapensee stated that Anderson and Sycamore were charged the same rate for 2019 and 2020, we are going to be charged the same as Sycamore for 2020 and 2021. She stated that Silverton was charged less for 2019, 2020 and 2021 than the rest of us. Mrs. Lapensee stated that the proposed rate will be about 18% higher than what we are paying now. She stated that our current rate is around \$53.00 an hour and it will jump to \$58.00 per hour which includes capital and personnel costs.

Ms. Leis stated that we need to ask the Sheriff’s Office why Silverton is paying less than everyone else. She stated that she would also ask Green Township what rate they are paying. Ms. Leis stated that we need to find out what the western Townships are paying and start making phone calls to the surrounding cities to see if we can get a quote from them. Mr. Beck suggested that we check with all the township’s and compare budgets and rates of their Police Departments.

Mr. Bryant asked what happened with the UC Study that Sycamore and Silverton participated in. Mrs. Lapensee stated that they have wrapped up that study and were supposed to be meeting with them to discuss the outcome.

Mr. Bryant asked if the costs in the spreadsheet is to maintain what we currently have. Mrs. Lapensee stated yes. She stated that if we increased to three 24/7 cars then the cost would increase another \$250,000.00 a year. Mr. Beck asked why such a jump in cost from 4.5% to 18%. Mrs. Lapensee stated that right now, we are not being billed for the power car when it is not in use and we are paying a lower rate per hour. She stated that with the new billing, we will have to pay for the power cars no matter what, whether the car is filled or not. Mr. Beck stated well what happens if we just say we can’t pay for the increase. Mrs. Lapensee stated that we would then just have to cut back to the amount we pay for now which would decrease service.

Ms. Leis stated that we also need to be aware that Loveland has put a levy on the ballot for over 16 mils. She stated that the taxes on the eastern side of the township will significantly increase. Mr. Bryant stated that Sycamore also has a levy on the ballot for November.

Mr. Beck asked if the \$1,084,000.00 amount includes the power car or will there be an additional cost for 2019. Mrs. Lapensee stated that she increased the 2018 amount by 4.5% which already includes the power car. She stated that the amount may vary depending on who takes vacation or gets sick and can't man the power car. She stated that in 2020, we will start paying for the people to man the car whether they are there or not. Mr. Beck suggested that we ask for the power shift car to be manned with overtime. Mrs. Lapensee stated that they are giving us a cheaper rate for the power car due to the non-overtime for those cars.

Mrs. Lapensee handed out spreadsheets for the costs of the cars, people, etc. over the last 3 years. She stated that we started paying around \$46.00 per hour in 2016 and the costs have risen to around \$53.00 per hour as of June 2019. Mrs. Lapensee stated that these current costs is for the people in the car and the benefits they earn. She suggested that we take out the capital costs and pay for those items ourselves so that we can keep our capital items in the township (MDC's, radios, body cameras, etc.). Ms. Leis asked who comes up with the percentages for the benefits that the employees earn? Mrs. Lapensee stated that she asked that and was told that the Auditor's Office comes up with the amounts. There was a discussion over how the bills are produced, the amounts and benefits that are billed, etc. Ms. Leis asked if we are paying for the persons and benefits for the fire department as well. Mrs. Lapensee stated yes.

Mr. Bryant stated that the other issue on the table is that there are multiple townships using our building rent free for the police. Mrs. Lapensee stated that she put together the costs of running those buildings for the utilities, etc. She stated that they are guessing that the township is breaking down paying bills at 50% for the fire department, 30% for the police and 20% for the administration.

Mr. Beck stated that Mrs. Lapensee is going to do a survey of the other townships and compare their budgets, number of employees, census, square miles and capital items. Mr. Beck is going to ask the Sheriff who generates the benefits percentages. Mr. Bryant stated that it would be interesting to see the difference between the cops on the road and the cops in the jail. Mr. Beck stated that we should push for a unit price vs a lump sum due to our constrained budget. He stated that we should also investigate receiving rent from Sycamore Township/Sheriff for the use of our building. Mrs. Leis asked how often we use the rest of the employees who are stationed at our building that we don't get billed for. She also asked Mrs. Lapensee to check with the surrounding cities to see if they are interested in providing us with service.

2. Proposed Fire Contract Increases. Mr. Bryant asked if we have ever put together a true cost of what it takes to run a fire department. Mrs. Lapensee stated no, that she only has the utility costs. She would need to add in other items for maintenance, supplies and capital equipment.

Mrs. Lapensee went through packet for the fire department which lists all their costs for personnel, capital, ems expenditures and other. She stated that it will increase 5% in 2020, 2021, 2022 and 2023 and by 2023 our costs will be around \$3 million. Ms. Leis wants to know how much we would save if we held onto the equipment more than what

he has planned to replace it. Mrs. Lapensee stated that it would depend on a lot of unknowns. Mr. Bryant stated that we take very good care of all our equipment. She stated that we could look at other manufacturers for an ambulance and fire equipment. Ms. Leis asked if the fire association donates equipment. Mrs. Lapensee stated that they last donated Ford Explorers to each jurisdiction in 2017. Mrs. Lapensee stated that they donated money toward our mural and provided us with a fountain for the Meade House.

Mrs. Lapensee stated that we will also have to ask for an increase in the millage for the safety services levy to be able to pay for the police and fire increases. She stated that if we renew both contracts at the new rate, we will be out of money in 3 years. She stated that we are spending 40% of the police costs from the safety services levy which amounts to \$700,000 of spending more than we are bringing in to pay for both services. She stated that the balance forward at the end of 2020 will be 1.7 million dollars which will be gone in 3 years if we don't increase the millage. She stated that the only other alternative is to cut back on the services provided.

Ms. Leis asked that we sit down with the Fire Department so they can explain why Symmes pays for 52% and Loveland pays 48%. She stated that we need to understand these items before we can negotiate increases. Mr. Bryant wants us to also look at replacement for equipment in the past to see our practices. Mrs. Lapensee stated that we last purchased the tower in 2013 and should last us until 2028. Ms. Leis asked if they have ever done a side by side comparison for the township vs the city.

Mr. Bryant asked if all our fire, ems and safety services levy are continuing. Mrs. Lapensee stated that we have a 1.5 and .5 mil levy that expires at the end of this year. We do have a continuous fire, ems and police levy that does not expire, but only collects at that rate of when it was adopted.

Mr. Bryant made a motion to adjourn the meeting. Mr. Beck seconded the motion and the roll call vote was as follows: Mr. Bryant - 'aye'; Mr. Beck - 'aye', Ms. Leis - 'aye'. Motion passes.

Meeting adjourned at 7:23 p.m.

Approved:

Philip J. Beck, Board President

Jodie L. Leis, Vice-President

Kenneth N. Bryant, Trustee