

**FRUITLAND TOWNSHIP
PUBLIC HEARING FOR PROPOSED FISCAL YEAR 2009 – 2010 BUDGET
MARCH 30, 2009 – 7:00 PM
MINUTES**

PRESENT - Trustee Bard, Trustee Deur, Clerk Rillema, Treasurer Boyer, Trustee Bole and Supervisor St. Amour

ALSO PRESENT - Eight (8) interested parties.

CALL TO ORDER –

Supervisor St. Amour called the Public Hearing for the Proposed 2009 – 2010 Fiscal Year Budget to order at 6:59 PM. He led the Pledge of Allegiance and asked all in attendance to stand for a moment of silence.

SUPERVISOR BUDGET COMMENTS –

Supervisor St. Amour stated that the Clerk, Treasurer, Trustees and he have spent many hours to balance the proposed budget. He stated that there are no wage increases for elected officials or commission/board members but wages for office staff will be discussed after public comment. Lower renegotiated contracts have been completed. The cleaning of the Township Hall has been internalized and the combining of the Ecology Station Attendant and Maintenance Position is currently taking place. This Board of Trustees has also placed \$50,000.00 in the Public Roads Fund prior to the end of the fiscal year which is a first time occurrence. A list of expenditures to review this year to try to accumulate more savings for next year will be completed. He thanked all in attendance and explained that Public Comment is allowed both before and after the Board discussion.

PUBLIC COMMENT –

1. Judy Marcinkowski, 3767 Jay Road – During these difficult times with jobs being eliminated, she questioned the wage increase for the office staff and felt it did not look good to the outside public and would ask this board to reconsider.
2. Betsy Grein, 5780 Oak Tree Lane – Asked where a copy of last year’s budget could be found and that the tax revenue appears to be down. Supervisor St. Amour stated that Mrs. Grein could get a copy of last year’s budget by contacting the office and that tax revenue would be discussed in the budget discussion.

PROPOSED 2009 – 2010 FISCAL YEAR BUDGET DISCUSSION –

Supervisor St. Amour explained to those in attendance and the Board that each department would be discussed as a whole and if questions arose in certain accounts to ask questions.

REVENUES:

Treasurer Boyer stated that about 94% of taxes were collected and that she was confident increasing the tax accounts about \$7500.00. State shared revenue according to the State website appears to be in line with the current year of approximately \$360,000.00. Supervisor St. Amour stated that the Permit Revenues were projected lower than last year due to the economy and that the Parks & Recreation Commission worked diligently in increasing their revenue budgets due to an increase in admission at the Lighthouse and advertising more of their merchandise possibly for sale at the township hall. Also a transfer from the Blueberry Festival for \$7000.00 will allow the Parks & Recreation Commission to purchase playground equipment for Nestrom Park.

EXPENDITURES:

Supervisor St. Amour stated that the budget prepared for tonight does include the 3% increase for the office staff (1% COL, up to 2% merit). Discussion by the Board and a direct question by Supervisor St. Amour to each board member resulted in eliminating the wage increase for fiscal year 2009 – 2010. Under Governing Body, Supervisor St. Amour stated that the Postage allocation to all departments has been completed but not evident on this budget. Under contracting-community service, amount budgeted for Muskegon Area First should be reduced to \$2090.00 due to the overpayment to Muskegon Area Chamber of Commerce for the past five years. Under Assessor, contracted for lower amount this year – cost savings. Under Attorney – cost savings due to asking Attorney Eklund to attend the work session only unless an action item requires him to attend the regular board meeting. Supervisor St. Amour stated that Transportation throughout the budget has been allocated \$200.00. The board will hopefully adopt through its policies and procedures, mileage to be reimbursed for travel outside of Muskegon County only. Under the Community Building, Supervisor St. Amour stated that several necessary repairs are needed which results in the Capital Improvements allocation of \$4000.00. Under Township Property, the Fire Barn has needed repairs. Treasurer Boyer and Supervisor St. Amour as members of the WLFA stated that the Lease Agreement and Articles of Incorporation are being reviewed. Repairs & Maintenance item “New Drain Field” needs to be listed under Capital Improvements. Under Cemetery, some repairs to the irrigation system and sprucing of grounds are needed. Under Police/Ordinance Enforcement, the Board will be working closer with the PINS officer and are awaiting recommendations from the Citizens Advisory Law Enforcement Committee. Under Inspection cost savings – lower contracted amount with Building Inspector. Throughout the budget, all computer software programs have been allocated to individual departments. Under Ecology

Transfer Station, Attendants position was combined with Maintenance position. Increased expenditures to Allied Waste were overlooked for the past two years and revenues were down approximately \$10,000.00. Tighter controls for accounting of cash at the transfer station have been put into place. After much analysis of revenues and expenses, Supervisor St. Amour compared the number of dumpsters Allied Waste billed in the past three years and found that they were almost identical from year to year. Supervisor St. Amour stated that this Board had to address this loss because of its fiscal responsibility to its taxpayers. Under Parks & Recreation, the commission work hard to have a budget that would be beneficial to do repairs and upkeep of the lighthouse and parks. Under Planning Commission, a request received from the Chairperson to lower the Contracting to \$8500.00 and increase Education & Dues to \$3000.00 and add a Transportation line item in the amount of \$200.00 was added. Under Zoning Board of Appeals a Transportation line item in the amount of \$200.00 was also added. With all the changes to be made, it appears that the budget will balance with excess dollars of approximately \$26,000.00. Trustee Deur asked Treasurer Boyer and Clerk Rillema if a new budget with current activity would be available for the March 31, 2009 meeting. Treasurer Boyer stated that all changes would be made and a clean copy would be available. Supervisor St. Amour stated that a quarterly report will be provided to the Board to review and make any necessary budget amendments to keep current.

PUBLIC COMMENT –

1. Tom Grein, 5780 Oak Tree Lane – Thanked Supervisor St. Amour for acknowledging that the Community Building needed attention. Also thanked the Board for taking a proactive stand on roads. Mr. Grein asked if we have a plan regarding franchise fees since Charter Communications has filed bankruptcy. Treasurer Boyer commented that the franchise fee is received from Comcast also. Mr. Grein asked about the membership to Muskegon Area First and Muskegon Area Chamber of Commerce and Supervisor St. Amour explained that Muskegon Area First is our contact for economic issues in Muskegon County which provides us with a complimentary membership to Muskegon Area Chamber of Commerce. Mr. Grein had questions on our insurance coverage/incentives and Trustee Deur shared with him the process of which the Township has chosen. Treasurer Boyer explained the VISA/Mastercard Charge Revenue as being a break-even account after we pay the merchant.
2. Peter Johnson, 5200 Lamos Road – Asked Supervisor St. Amour if the action items regarding the Vihtelic property at the end of Lamos Road was taken care of yet. Supervisor St. Amour said no but will be completed after the budget process subsides. Mr. Johnson asked about the ordinance enforcement/police enforcement in the area and wondered if there had been an outbreak. Trustee Bard stated that the Citizens Advisory Law Enforcement Committee (CALEC) had spoken to the PINS/Sheriff's Department and the answer was no. Evidence tends to show that if police enforcement is visible, crime is lower. The CALEC will be making a presentation to the Township Board in May with recommendations.

3. Judy Marcinkowski, 3767 Jay Road – Responded to Mr. Johnson that she too serves on the CALEC and they reviewed five years of data. Mrs. Marcinkowski thanked the Board for all the hard work and felt very lucky to be a resident that heard how and why decisions were made for the 2009 – 2010 budget process.
4. David Reynolds, 6467 S. Shore Drive – Appreciated efforts in the development of the budget and recognizing allocation of costs to better serve each department. He stated five areas that he feels will need constant attention: Ecology Station, White River Lighthouse Station, Community Building, White Lake Fire Authority and Inspection Department.
5. Kimon Kotos, 6171 Duck Lake Road – Asked if this Board has ever considered consolidating operating costs and expenditures with other townships or county wide. Mr. Kotos asked about ordinance enforcement/police enforcement regarding speeding and alcohol on Duck Lake Road. Trustee Bard stated that a program exists for youth alcohol through a state grant and Fruitland Township is active. Mr. Kotos asked about local bus transportation. Supervisor St. Amour said at this time no bus transportation exists.
6. Betsy Grein, 5780 Oak Tree Lane – Asked if bids were received for insurance and if a health savings plan has ever been considered. Supervisor St. Amour, Treasurer Boyer and Trustee Deur commented about high insurance costs and the Townships attempt to keep out of pocket expenses to the employees reasonable.

Supervisor St. Amour thanked all for coming and invited them to the March 31, 2009 Special Meeting at 4:00 PM.

ADJOURNMENT –

Motion by Trustee Bole, second by Trustee Bard, ***ADOPTED***, to adjourn the Public Hearing for the proposed 2009 – 2010 Fiscal Year Budget at 8:35 PM.

*Upon Voice Vote: **7AYES***

Respectfully Submitted,

Karolyn Rillema, Clerk
Township of Fruitland