

Held

March 8, 2012

**OPENING OF MEETING**

Mr. Ritter called the meeting to order at 6:00PM. Mr. Deters, Ms. Rinehart and Mrs. Harlow were in attendance.

**EXECUTIVE SESSION**

At 6:00 pm, Mr. Deters made a motion to enter Executive Session for the purpose of discussing matters regarding the employment and compensation of public employees and officials as well as pending and imminent litigation. Mr. Ritter offered the second. No discussion and the roll was called:

- Mr. Deters. "Aye"
- Ms. Rinehart. "Aye"
- Mr. Ritter. "Aye"

The Board returned from Executive Session at 6:20 pm.

Mr. Ritter made a motion to terminate the employment of Kim Henderson, effective today. Ms. Rinehart offered the second. No discussion and the roll was called:

- Mr. Deters. "Aye"
- Ms. Rinehart. "Aye"
- Mr. Ritter. "Aye"

Mr. Deters made a motion to demote Sgt. Chris Phillips to police officer, with a reduction in pay and rank. His new rate of pay will be \$65,590.45. He will not be eligible for promotion for three years and not eligible for specialized duties for one year. He will be referred to the Employee Assistance Program.

Ms. Rinehart offered the second.

No discussion and the roll was called:

- Mr. Deters. "Aye"
- Ms. Rinehart. "Aye"
- Mr. Ritter. "Aye"

Mr. Reuter requested the Board consider Resolution 8-12, "Resolution Authorizing Colerain Township's Participation in Emergency Road or Street Repair and Maintenance in Other Political Subdivisions," which he read by caption.

Mr. Deters made such motion Ms. Rinehart offered the second. No discussion and the roll was called:

- Mr. Deters. "Aye"
- Ms. Rinehart. "Aye"
- Mr. Ritter. "Aye"

The Board moved to the Town Hall meeting, "Proactively Addressing New Budget Realities."

Mr. Ritter welcomed the citizens in attendance and those watching on Waycross Community Media. He said we are in an unprecedented environment, with the cuts from the state and the economy. He said the 2012 budget discussion started last summer. He said the Board wanted to hold off until the new administrator came on-board to have a dialogue like tonight, to engage the citizens, who can give feedback and ideas.

**March 8, 2012***Held*

Mr. Ritter and Mr. Rowan offered the presentation. The presentation is attached to these minutes as Attachment 1.

Then, the citizens had the opportunity to address the elected officials.

Betty Strum, of 2411 Bluelark Drive, wished to speak about the Board about the Skyline Community Center. She will speak to the Board at the next meeting about some grant proposals as there are funds available.

Pam and Richard Briggs had no comments.

Ralph Sandoz, a former Township Trustee, said the people put faith in the Board by electing them and if they don't do the right thing, they will be replaced at the next election.

Hallie Kinney spoke in favor of the community access television. She's been involved with it for three years and it finally came to Colerain Township. She "begged" the Board to keep this in the budget.

Mr. Ritter said he sees the value of the Waycross, but it is a discretionary spending item, when you balance it against crumbling streets. It comes down to a judgment all to what's critical and what's discretionary.

Betty Sandoz asked if the funds used for the eliminated newsletter could go toward the Waycross funding. She said she was here to get some more information. She asked about other considerations, like the Board cutting back their salaries. She said the Township pays health benefits for trustees at \$15,000 per person. She said that if a Board member has a regular job, he or she should have benefits through their company and not be taking it out of the township. She said the public is picking up expenses that are not necessary, when the official has other options. She said the new administrator, who she doesn't know at all, except for what she read in the newspaper, is advertising for a full-time accounting director. She asked why we need this position if we are cutting back.

Mr. Rowan said we are streamlining processes and automating systems. We do have a full-time vacancy in this office, which we will replace. We will raise expectations, but this is not in addition to the staffing level. There will be a marginal difference in salary.

Doug Hechler spoke in support of the Skyline Community Center. He introduced Greg Moore, senior program director. Mr. Moore said there is nothing more critical than serving the youth. They serve youth aged 9-15 and 16 to 22, with a variety of programs, including youth mentoring, a computer lab, sports camps, and the state and world championship Double Dutch jumpers. He said they have kept their funding levels down. He asked for a timeline about their funding and what type of grants we are looking at.

Mr. Rowan said that Mr. Birkenhauer and he have discussed several funding options. He said they are looking at private funding sponsors.

Mel Williams, of 2357 Bluelark Drive, spoke in favor of the Skyline Community Center. He said he and his neighbors started working on getting a community center when his son was in Kindergarten and when it was opened, his son was in college. He said Skyline is the last to get anything in Colerain. The Senior Center was created and up and running before this center. He said he doesn't

## RECORD OF PROCEEDINGS

Minutes of

SPECIAL

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BARRETT BROTHERS, PUBLISHERS, SPRINGFIELD, OHIO

Form 6101

Held

March 8, 2012

see true representation for Skyline and those who look like Skyline on the Board. He said the Trustees only look at dollars and sense. He said they worked for years without funding. The center should be expanding and now we're taking about taking away what little funding they have. He said they need true representation for the Skyline Community Center on the Board of Trustees.

Dan Unger, of Appletree Court, spoke as a resident, but is also a member of the Northwest Local School Board, in favor of the Waycross access. He said Time Warner has 14,000 basic cable customers and gives equal access to all. He said Waycross Community Media allows residents to make their own shows. He said this is some people's only connection to local government and a way to get information easily. He said the Township receives \$350,000/year in franchise fees from Time Warner and we could take some of these funds to pay for this access.

Bernie Fiedeldey is a resident, business owner and former trustee. He agrees with Mr. Unger about the public access. In his neighborhood, they don't have cable, but they can pull it up on the computer. It would be a travesty to lose that.

Mr. Fiedeldey said that Mr. Rowan did a good job of covering the budget, but he takes exception with the notion that the general fund would be broke in two years. He's not sure how that will be when we have \$8 million sitting there and we could use part of that today.

Mr. Fiedeldey said the Township's taxes are #3 in the county, so levies would be out of line now. He said he presentation said we would need a police levy in one to two years. He said that is a negative comment because we don't know if that's the case. There might be other ways to eliminate that deficit, like merged services and collaboration.

He said that estate tax is estimated at \$1.2 million, but budgeted at \$500,000, with anything more as a plus. Maybe we need to keep track to where that's going and a dynamic budget, project out and change it.

He asked if the benchmarking is within Hamilton County only. He said he would rather be driving the car, be a leader.

Mr. Rowan said we are doing benchmarking locally and with others who have a best in class service.

Mr. Fiedeldey said that we have cut the receptionist to part-time. He said that calling in to the Township is near impossible. We need to find funds to have someone to mind the phones.

Mr. Fiedeldey asked about the property maintenance abatement program and said that we would have part-time people handle this. He asked if this would be a profit center.

Mr. Rowan said it is our goal to make sure that we handle nuisance abatements efficiently. We will do this with seasonal summer workers, by re-allocating existing resources,

He said that we are looking at a 6% reduction in general fund and that our safety services pretty expensive compared to others. He urged the Board to keep stump removal in the budget as this is a property maintenance issue. He asked about doing away with fulltime zoning inspector.

Held

March 8, 2012

Mr. Rowan said we will have two part-time inspectors and re-allocate other's time by re-shuffling paperwork.

Mr. Fiedeldey said that central purchasing is a good idea and we should get yearly proposals.

Mr. Rowan said the plan is to consolidate and centralize purchase and also participate in cooperative purchasing with other governments.

Mr. Fiedeldey said that Colerain can become a destination. We have lost population and that's a concern.

Julie Copeland said she works for the University of Cincinnati as a financial analysis and lives in the Skyline Community. Her daughter, now in the Navy, was on the double Dutch team. She asked about how much the current cut would that save and if the current cuts process balance out over the three years or will there be additional cuts over the next few years?

Mr. Rowan said he is working on a forecast for 2013 to 2016, including how we will manage the loss of the estate tax, etc. and how we can enhance revenue without a tax. So, in 2013 will have a different list. He said our goal is to not impact direct services to residents.

Ms. Copeland asked about the costs of empty buildings being absorbed by the Township. She said the lights are always on at bigg's.

Mr. Birkenhauer said the Township does not pay for the lights as those are paid by the owner of the building.

Connie Kressler said she owns an insurance agency on Galbraith Road. The Skyline Center is important and Northbrook needs a center, too. Everything is tight now and health insurance is a large expense of all major companies. She said that taking off working spouses is miniscule. She said the big cuts happen with the type of plan and using health savings accounts and high deductibles and premiums. She offered to help develop the Township's plan.

Elaine Gauck spoke in favor of public access and said it's a way for people to know what's going on, which we need to feel safer. She complimented the fire, police and public works departments.

Mr. Fiedeldey said that with the public access, a lot of organizations use it. He said this should be a shared service, with each group paying their fair share.

Dave Gruelich asked where he can find more detail.

Mr. Rowan said he is still developing his forecasting, which he will share with the Financial Advisory Committee and at future meetings.

Mr. Harlow said the e-gov services section of the Township website contains current and past financial information.

Mr. Williams said that he called the Township offices this morning, at least 10 times and got 10 different voice mails. No one picked up the phone today. He said he finally left a voice message and that person called him back.

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Mr. Deters commended the Board on having this meeting. This conversation is what brings the community together on what we do. He said the problem is that we have hard decisions to make, but we are getting things on the table and talking about it. That's why we're here tonight. The Board has not made any decisions. Colerain has been there with Skyline and other neighboring communities have not, but we will have to look at alternatives. He said the General fund is under attack. It's easy for Columbus and downtown to send us bad news and put it on our back. Communication makes him happy and we need to stay engaged. We need to look at alternatives and this is a new age.

Mrs. Harlow thanked everything for being active and engaged in our community. She said that with the Township's public records, she wants citizens to have as much information as they desire. There is a lot out on our website and citizens can call or e-mail with any request.

Ms. Rinehart thanked everyone who came tonight. She said that we do want your feedback. She wants to represent everyone, so feel free to contact her.

Mr. Ritter also offered his thanks to everyone for coming. He said that while he may not share the same skin color with others, he does care so much about this community. He said that we are not going to kick the can down the road. We will have a truthful conversation about the choices we have.

**ADJOURNMENT**

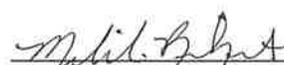
With no further business to come before the Board, at 7:58 PM, Mr. Ritter motioned for adjournment. Mr. Deters offered a second.

Mr. Deters. "Aye"

Ms. Rinehart. "Aye"

Mr. Ritter. "Aye"

  
Fiscal Officer

  
Trustee

  
Trustee

  
Trustee