

Special Meeting
St. Clair Township

DATE: July 20, 2010

TIME: 7:00 p.m.

LOCATION: St. Clair Township
107 Service Street
Swansea, IL 62226

MEMBERS PRESENT: Tim Buchanan, Supervisor
Mary Carroll, Clerk
Bob Trentman, Trustee
Dave Barnes, Trustee
Richard Schobert, Trustee
Greg Bridgman, Trustee
Mark Burk, Hwy Commissioner

OTHERS PRESENT: Dean Wallen
Clinton Trentman
Drew Buchanan
Jim Page
John Openlander

Roll Call:

The special meeting of the St. Clair Township Board was called to order by Supervisor, Tim Buchanan with the Pledge of Allegiance. Roll call was taken. All present except for Assessor, Robert Knee.

Public Comment:

Supervisor Buchanan asked for public comment. There was none.

Business Items:

A) Some bills were approved.

B) Sewer Rate and Listen to Public Input

Supervisor Buchanan directed everyone's attention to the St. Clair Township Wastewater Rate Evaluation. He reviewed the document. Supervisor Buchanan then explained how the sewer rates are currently charged and how the increase will affect the residents using the marker board for a visual display.

Supervisor Buchanan went over the different tables in the evaluation and explained that Table #2 shows the increase in dollars and that Table #3 shows it in percentages. He added that the tables had been revised since the last time the Board reviewed them to include an Option #4, that has no minimum fee. He said this option was requested by Trustee Barnes. Supervisor Buchanan reminded the Board that we need to look at these different options not just for particular groups, but the whole township.

Supervisor Buchanan asked for questions and comments from the public. Jim Page had several questions and comments related to why the increase was so high. He feels that we need to collect

the delinquent monies owed and stated that while he is trying to be efficient, some people are wasting water and those who are conserving should be rewarded for that. He couldn't understand why Swansea would get such a large percentage of the money. Supervisor Buchanan explained that we are not paying Swansea anything while we are still in negotiations with them. He said the reasons for the increase were: 1) the cost of the new plant, 2) our debt to Swansea; and 3) people are using less water. Mr. Page thought that if people were using less water, the costs should go down. Supervisor Buchanan explained that even though there would be less water to treat, there are still certain fixed costs associated with the operation such as capital costs, employee salaries and repairs.

Trustee Trentman said he was still confused about why we were paying Swansea the amount that they demanded, and he did not feel this was right. Supervisor Buchanan explained that we were not paying Swansea anything yet. The Township is still waiting on information from Swansea so that we could begin the negotiations. Supervisor Buchanan said we were preparing for the worst, but hoping for a better outcome.

Trustee Bridgman also reiterated that we had to plan for the worst case scenario, and if we did not our sewer customers could possibly see an even higher increases because of the timing. He went on to say that he feels having city sewer brings value to a homeowner and there is a certain cost that has to be associated with having that asset. Trustee Bridgman said that we are currently in the lowest percentile of municipalities for sewer rates and even with the increase we will be in about the 50% range. He said that he lives in the Village of Swansea and his sewer rate is much higher than what a typical Township customer is paying.

Jim Page again asked why is so much going to Swansea, and Supervisor Buchan said we had to plan for the worst case scenario. He also said that the fixed costs are much greater than the usage variables. Supervisor Buchanan asked Mr. Page if he had to make a decision what option would he chose. He said he felt that Option 4 was not a viable solution. He felt that Option 1 is probably the fairest. He said feels that the larger users are getting the same increase as those who don't use as much. However, he said he did feel that businesses should get a break because you need businesses in the community for it to thrive.

Trustee Barnes said that the reason he requested Option 4 with no minimum usage fee because he wanted the customers to pay for only their fair share. However, he has thought it through and he feels that Option 2 is probably a better choice.

Trustee Schobert said he agrees it is very hard to set rates on estimated costs, but if we don't, six months down the line we are really going to be behind the eight ball. He said that last time Swansea did an upgrade, the Township was given approximately two years prior notice. This time, there was no warning. He also stated that you have to have a minimum fee, and it cannot be based on all usage fees.

Trustee Trentman said that Swansea is claiming the Township owes a certain dollar amount and that the Township is figuring less. He doesn't like the way it is being handled. Supervisor Buchanan reminded Trustee Trentman that the Township and Swansea have just begun negotiating, and that the Township is still waiting on information from Swansea. Supervisor Buchanan stated that 1) We need to be responsible by preparing as if we may lose the arbitration, and 2) once things are finalized, there is a possibility that we can lower the rates. He emphasized that it is hard to make a decision without the data we have requested, but we have to do something now because our reserves are only getting lower.

Trustee Schobert made a motion to pass Option #2 sewer rate as presented and to approve the subsequent ordinance presented. Trustee Barnes seconded the motion. Supervisor Buchanan

asked again if there was any questions or discussion before voting. Roll call vote: Trentman (NO), Bridgman (YES), Schobert (YES), Barnes (YES), Buchanan (YES). No's-1, Yes's-4. Motion passes.

Trustee Schobert made a motion to have the Town Clerk read Resolution Authorizing Amendment of the Wastewater Facilities Ordinances of the Town of St. Clair, St. Clair County, Illinois. by title only. Trustee Barnes seconded the motion. Roll call vote. All in favor.

Trustee Schobert made a motion to adopt the Resolution Authorizing Amendment of the Wastewater Facilities Ordinances of the Town of St. Clair, St. Clair County, Illinois. Trustee Barnes seconded the motion. Roll call vote. Trentman (NO), Bridgman (YES), Schobert (YES), Barnes (YES), Buchanan (YES). No's-1, Yes's-4. Motion passes.

Supervisor Buchan said that he recommended striking Section 6.02(b) for the Wastewater Facilities Ordinances because it references Appendix E and this Appendix has been unable to be found. He also said there is currently no one in the situation this situation describes. He said if the situation would arise at any time in the future, consideration to add it back could be done at that time. Everyone agreed this was acceptable.

Supervisor Buchanan thanked everyone for their participation, and invited everyone back for future meetings.

Trustee Bridgman made a motion to adjourn the meeting. Trustee Schobert seconded the motion. Roll call vote. All in favor.

The meeting was adjourned at 8:19 p.m.

Respectfully submitted:

Mary Carroll
Township Clerk