

VILLAGE OF HOMEWOOD
BOARD OF TRUSTEES MEETING
TUESDAY—OCTOBER 10, 2017
VILLAGE HALL BOARD ROOM

CALL TO ORDER: Village President Hofeld called the regular meeting to order at 7:30 p.m. There were approximately 10 people from the public present. Three press representatives were in attendance.

PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE: Village President Hofeld led the audience in the Pledge of Allegiance.

ROLL CALL: Clerk Marilyn Thomas called the roll. Those present were Village President Richard Hofeld, Trustee Barbara Dawkins, Trustee Lisa Purcell, Trustee Karen Washington, Trustee Anne Colton, Trustee Jay Heiferman and Trustee Larry Burnson.

INTRODUCTION OF STAFF: Village President Hofeld introduced staff members in attendance: Village Attorney Christopher Cummings, Village Manager Jim Marino, Assistant Village Manager Napoleon Haney, Director of Finance Dennis Bubenik, Director of Economic and Community Development Angela Mesaros, Police Chief Bill Alcott, Fire Chief Bob Grabowski and Director of Public Works John Schaefer.

MINUTES: The minutes of the meeting of September 26, 2017 were accepted. A motion was made by Trustee Colton and seconded by Trustee Purcell to approve the minutes of the September 26, 2017, regular board meeting.

Roll Call: AYES – Trustees Dawkins, Purcell, Washington, Colton, and Heiferman. NAYS – None. Trustee Burnson abstained. Motion carried.

CLAIMS LIST: The Claims List of \$489,973.59 was reviewed. There were no questions from the Trustees.

A motion was made by Trustee Burnson and seconded by Trustee Colton to approve the Claims List as presented.

Roll Call: AYES – Trustees Dawkins, Purcell, Washington, Colton, Heiferman and Burnson. NAYS – None. Motion carried.

President Hofeld reported that two items came to 59 percent of the Claims List: Employees health insurance for October was \$210,522.03 and \$80,424.74 to Thorn Creek Sanitary District.

HEAR FROM THE AUDIENCE: Edwin Valentine, a representative of Grape & Grain, asked when his appeal for a change in his liquor license would be heard. President

Hofeld said a letter should be addressed to him as Homewood's Liquor Commissioner stating his request and action would be taken.

REAPPOINTMENTS: President Hofeld presented Paul Kramer and Regina Zohfeld, members of the Tree Committee, for reappointment. Their terms will be extended to October 10, 2020.

A motion was made by Trustee Colton and seconded by Trustee Purcell to approve the reappointments of Paul Kramer and Regina Zohfeld to the Tree Committee.

Roll Call: AYES – Trustees Dawkins, Purcell, Washington, Colton, Heiferman and Burnson. NAYS – None. Motion carried.

OMNIBUS VOTE: Clerk Thomas presented the Omnibus Vote:

- A. BID WAIVER/PURCHASE OF REPLACEMENT RADIOS: Waive competitive bidding due to a sole supplier and approve the purchase of six (6) Motorola APX 6000 radios and accessories for the Police Department for a total amount of \$31,175.16.
- B. RESOLUTION R-2287/WOW'S ASSIGNMENT TO RIGHT-OF-WAY AGREEMENT TO VERIZON: Pass a resolution consenting to assignment of the agreement between Village of Homewood, Cook County, Illinois and Sigecom, LLC d/b/a WideopenWest, Inc. WOW! internet, cable and phone to Mcimetro Access Transmission Service Corporation.
- C. ORDINANCE M-2056/ ESTABLISH PUBLIC COMMENT RULES: Pass an ordinance establishing rules for public comment during public meetings.
- D. BID AWARD/ VACTOR COMBINATION STORM SEWER CLEANING MACHINE:
 - i. BUDGET AMENDMENT: Approve a budget amendment increasing Vehicle #44 Sanitary Sewer Jet Cleaner account line (01-3-812-55-7044) by \$121,440.00.
 - ii. BID WAIVER/VACTOR COMBINATION STORM SEWER CLEANING MACHINE: Waive competitive bidding requirements due to Joint Governmental Purchasing Program and purchase one (1) 2017 Vactor RamJet Truck Mounted Sewer Cleaner from Standard Equipment Company through the National Joint Powers Alliance Cooperative, in the total amount of \$165,440.00.

A motion was made by Trustee Purcell and seconded by Trustee Colton to approve the Omnibus Vote as presented.

Roll Call: AYES – Trustees Dawkins, Purcell, Washington, Colton, Heiferman and Burnson. NAYS – None. Motion carried.

OLD/NEW BUSINESS: Manager Marino came before the board with information on home rule. He said the fundamental issue is self-governance rather than being under rules set by the state. The Village has faced several issues over the past few years -- school funding, public safety and property values – that could be addressed through home rule.

Although schools are not under village administration, the quality of schools and school board members' attempts to keep balanced budgets through referendum impact village residents. Administrators and the board have done their best to address public safety and property issues, but home rule would make it much easier.

Mr. Marino outlined how home rule would allow the village to help other taxing bodies that have only property taxes and state funding to rely on. The village budget is supplemented by sales tax revenue. Mr. Marino said there could be an additional one-quarter of 1 percent sales tax added to purchases in Homewood. That revenue would go into a separate fund designated for District 153, District 161, H-F High District 233, Homewood Public Library and Homewood-Flossmoor Park District to use. The increase is expected to raise \$1 million annually.

Sales in Homewood are now taxed at 9 percent (state, county, RTA and village taxes). Even with the small increase of one-quarter percent, Homewood would still have a low tax rate.

Sales tax sharing with other taxing districts is not a novel idea. It is in place in Carbondale, East Peoria, Mt. Vernon and other places in Illinois.

Mr. Marino also outlined the village's need for greater control on rental property maintenance. The village has limited ability to inspect properties. Chief Grabowski, who oversees the Building Department, outlined goals for rental property inspections. Staff now can only inspect the outside front and interior hallways. He estimated 1,000 units don't get internal inspections. Attempts at a voluntary inspection program haven't gotten off the ground, but if the Village had home rule, the program could be mandatory. Currently, 6 percent of single family homes are rentals, but they have 25 percent of the code violations.

Public safety changes could improve staffing and reduce costs. Police Chief Alcott said in the last year, Homewood has hired six new officers from its certified list. However, they are not immediately available for duty. It takes 16 weeks in the police academy and another 15 weeks of officers going through a Homewood field program. All that time, the Village is paying their salaries.

To meet staffing, the Village has been paying overtime pay, and it was forced to drop its Tactical Unit for a time because it couldn't give officers time for that work.

Home rule would allow the Village to bypass hiring inexperienced officers and hire trained officers serving in other departments. The experienced officer would skip the testing process but still go through a polygraph and a fitness program. They wouldn't need to go through the academy, saving 15 weeks of unavailable time.

The same would be true for the Homewood Fire Department. Chief Grabowski said it takes 2 to 5 years to train a firefighter/paramedic. New firefighters have been hired and the department paid an estimated \$140,000 in salaries the past two years before the new hires were ready for full-time work. The department has appropriated \$100,000 of its budget to overtime. There are retirements in the offing, and being able to hire trained firefighters would improve staffing and budgeting for the department.

Home rule is automatic for communities with a population over 25,000. Homewood is near 20,000, so the Village is governed by state statutes. Neighboring communities, including Thornton and East Hazel Crest, approved home rule.

Trustees can limit home rule by creating a check and balance system, and residents can call for a referendum to repeal home rule.

Mr. Marino proposed starting public information meetings in November in preparation for a referendum question on the ballot March 20, 2018. Working with other taxing bodies on shared revenue will require intergovernmental agreements.

When President Hofeld opened the floor for questions, residents asked about property code enforcement and whether that meant all homes would be inspected at point-of-sale. Mr. Marino said that is not in discussion, and the Village has the power to conduct point-of-sale inspections now and chooses not to do that. Another question was whether it would be cheaper to merge Homewood and Flossmoor – reducing the expense for two administrations, two police and fire departments, etc. Chief Grabowski and Chief Alcott said the two districts do cooperate with other departments, and are part of a joint emergency call center.

Another resident said home rule would allow for more taxes, like the eating-in tax. Attorney Cummings said that one is specifically allowed by state law.

Trustees offered comment on the proposal. Trustee Dawkins said a lot has changed in Illinois in the 10 years since Homewood last proposed home rule. Her support for home rule is part financial and part the ability to empower the community and give the Village ways to maintain the community. Trustee Washington asked about lateral hires for police and fire departments, but said if the chiefs believe it is a good move she could agree.

Trustee Colton said the issues may be raised by the village, but they are community issues.

President Hofeld hears complaints about property upkeep at his Saturday meet-and-greet sessions. The Village cares about property upkeep but now is limited. Raising the sales tax to help other taxing districts is a good move, but stressed the Village will not be involved in a formula for distribution.

MANAGER'S REPORT: None

GENERAL BOARD DISCUSSION: Trustee Heiferman thanks residents for stopping by his meet-and-greet on the first Monday of the month at Starbucks on Harwood.

Allisa Opyd, events coordinator, reported the last Farmers Market would be Saturday, Oct. 14, and that evening will be Hobo Night.

EXECUTIVE SESSION: A motion was made by Trustee Purcell and seconded by Trustee Colton for the board to move into executive session to discuss the purchase or lease of real property.

Roll Call: AYES – Trustees Dawkins, Purcell, Washington, Colton, Heiferman and Burnson. NAYS – None. Motion carried.

The board moved to Executive Session at 8:40 p.m.

The board returned from Executive Session at 8:55.

Finance Director Bubenik pointed out a typo in an Omnibus item.

- i. BUDGET AMENDMENT: Approve a budget amendment increasing Vehicle #44 Sanitary Sewer Jet Cleaner account line (01-3-812-55-7044) by \$121,440.00.

He asked the board to amend the dollar amount to \$131,440.00.

A motion was made by Trustee Purcell and seconded by Trustee Colton to correct the Omnibus Vote item to read \$131,440.00.

Roll Call: AYES – Trustees Dawkins, Purcell, Washington, Colton, Heiferman and Burnson. NAYS – None. Motion carried.

A motion was made by Trustee Burnson and seconded by Trustee Colton to adjourn the regular meeting of the Board of Trustees.

The meeting adjourned at 9 p.m. on voice vote.

Respectfully submitted,

Marilyn Thomas
Village Clerk