

Vergennes Township Board

Special Meeting

10381 Bailey Drive- Lowell, MI 49331

MINUTES

February 6, 2019

A Special Meeting of the Vergennes Township Board was called to order on February 6, 2019 at 10 a.m. by Supervisor Wittenbach. Also present were Mork, Rasch, Hoffman and Gillett. The purpose of the meeting was to work on formulating the 2019-20 budget, hear a presentation from the Lowell Area Fire Authority, and a presentation from The Right Place.

Revenues were reviewed, and proposed figures added to the 2019-20 budget for approval in March. The state is projecting a 5.5% increase in State Revenue Sharing. Vergennes Township's share in the State Revenue Sharing for the 2019-20 FY is estimated to be \$375,000. This is paid in five payments to the Township.

There will be a May school election. With the new election statutory requirements imposed on the Clerk's office on and around Election Day, Hoffman will review the Election Assistant line calculation for 2019-20 and present figures for future budget discussion.

Deputy Chief, Shannon Witherell and Chief, Ron van Overbeek from The Lowell Area Fire Authority gave a presentation on their proposed need for three, full-time firefighters who would work from 6 am – 4 pm. Witherell went over current issues with staffing, which he noted was a national problem. The Lowell Fire Authority currently has twenty-two paid-on-call firefighters. The additional cost to add three full-time firefighters is estimated to be \$265,000 annually. This is an estimated increase of \$65,000 for each municipality. Last year's Fire Authority run totals were:

- Lowell Township: 292 Runs
- Vergennes Township: 168 Runs
- Lowell City: 398 Runs

The Board and members of the community had many questions on the need for three full-time staff and if there were other ways the Fire Authority could assure that calls have coverage. Hoffman requested a report that shows how many paid-on-call firefighters currently show at each of the calls and noted that this was a report that used to be provided monthly to each municipality and provided great information. Chief noted there is a report that can be generated by the Authority's program and it will be produced and provided. There was a question as to how the Fire Authority Funding Formula is broken down for each municipality and it was noted by the township assessor that determining the formula based on SEV of the municipalities should be reviewed since it is Taxable Value that is used to determine a municipality's tax base, not SEV. Authority Chairman Herb noted that this formula was reviewed a few years ago, and can be reviewed again.

Brad Comment, a representative from The Right Place, gave a presentation on their non-profit economic development organization. In business since 1985, they provide support and resources for companies in West Michigan. Their goal is to bring new capital investments, new jobs, and to retain jobs in our area. They are looking for investment and community partners to support their mission.

Support staff hourly employee rates were discussed and reviewed. J. Stone will receive \$1.00 per hour raise as Assessing Support staff. S. Ford, will retain her rate and be paid out of the Building Dept support staff and Clerical budget. M. Stone will receive a \$.50 per hour raise as Deputy Clerk.

The meeting was adjourned at 3:30 pm.