



WEBSTER TOWNSHIP

**Webster Township
Budget Public Hearing FY 2025
March 19, 2024, 7:00 P.M.**

Members present: Members present: Supervisor John Kingsley; Treasurer John Scharf; Trustees Dan Munzel, Jeff Harms, John Westman, Shelly Vrsek; Deputy Supervisor Rick Kleinschmidt; Deputy Clerk Donna Whitney; and 27 citizens. Absent: Clerk Barb Calleja

Kingsley opens Budget Public Hearing for board discussion on FY2025 budget at 7:56 p.m.

General Fund is supported by 0.6900 mills, Public Safety is supported by 2.6000 mills and PDR is supported by 0.4735 mills.

Kingsley said there are 3 changes from last month. 2 for retirement which were recalculations and 1 for an incorrect number budget. (101-257-718.000; 101-267-715.000; 101-267-718.000)

Vrsek asked if previous suggestions for changes are reflected in this budget.

Kingsley answered that yes, they are.

Scharf noted that there are 2 errors in the retirement line-item amounts. The Assessor Retirement line item shows a 13.6% increase which we had agreed last month should be a 7% increase. Likewise, the Office Manager retirement line-item only shows a 0.3% increase.

Kingsley said they both should be 7% and we need to correct those.

Scharf said the correct amount should be \$7703.67 for line item 101-257-718.000, and for line item 101-267-718.000 the correct amount should be \$4020.06.

Westman wants to discuss the Assessor's salary. Concurrs with the speaker that the 7% increase for the assessor each year and in years past is excessive. Thinks the assessor is probably at the peak of his relative market value compared to others in similar positions. Has had this discussion with the assessor and he understands his point. Suggests rather than a 7% increase it should be 3.5% which is pretty much in line with the budget memo. Nice to take care of our employees but we can't put them in a position where they are not marketable anywhere else. Not fair to them or our taxpayers. Need to balance the interests of the individuals with the interests of the taxpayers. As far as the office manager, she is a lot less farther along in her career projection, ~~so does~~ Westman has no objections that being 7%. Would rather see it at 5%, but is more concerned with the assessors.

Scharf says that 3.5% would be a raise of \$3149.86. Would take him to \$93,145.93.

Harms would like us to develop salary ranges and caps.

Vrsek says the rates of assessors are online as public information.

Scharf asks if you can see the granulation of their level of licensure.

Vrsek says no, but wants to add that the assessor has other responsibilities such as being our IT person so it is not an apples to apples comparison.

Westman states that most of the other comparable positions would be for 40 hours, not 32.

Kingsley says that may not be the case. If you look at communities very similar in value and number of residents, you will see that they pay somewhere around \$50,000 for their assessor, and that is for 1 day a week. Researched assessor salaries and could not match up another assessor of a similar size community with our situation. Pittsfield and Scio and are both bigger, and they pay their assessors more, and they have a number of people working in their department that they supervise. In terms of a 1 man show, couldn't come up with one that worked full time, whether it was 40 hours or 32. Checked with a financial planner on what is a fair salary for a professional and the number they came up with was 7.5%. Rounded it down to 7% when building the budget, and it seemed fair. CPI doesn't cover the CPI anymore. 3 years ago, they changed the formula, and took out food and energy. When doing the budget in December the cost of living was 3.4. Taxes went up 5%. Would feel more comfortable with 5% in as much as that's how much our taxes went up.

Munzel said, on the revenue side, this past year our interest income far exceeded expectations, which is good. Right now, we are not even through the whole year and we are almost at 116,000 in interest, due in large part to shifting money to higher interest bearing accounts. For this next year you are proposing a budget revenue of \$60,000 and given that interest rates are fluctuating and maybe coming down from their high, is that still a conservative number? Should it be more or less?

Scharf said that according to the February report, with 1 more month to go, our interest in the general fund so far this year is \$88,663.00. That's actual interest paid to us in 11 months. Have no special knowledge to know what interest rates are going to be going forward. Generally speaking they won't be much different than they are now, but expect them to start tailing off, when and by how much no idea.

Munzel said he read the number wrong. Apologized. Thinking about the percentages of 7% to 3.5% to 5%. It would make sense to split that in some manner, to end up with maybe 4% for example.

Kingsley asks if 4% is a proposal? One of 4 proposals. I think the original proposal is fair based on what we expect from our assessor, but there are differences of opinion which I respect. We



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need to nail down some numbers and move forward with the budget. Whatever we do on this particular line item does not impact the overall budget, but it does affect the budget long term.

Westman says the issue I see is that if every year is a 7% increase, that will be a lot going through the years.

Kingsley says that goes to the statement from Harms that there needs to be a stated ceiling which needs to be constantly reviewed.

Vrsek likes 4%.

Harms likes 4%.

Westman agrees with 4%.

Scharf says that brings us to \$93,595.91 for the assessor.

Kingsley asks if we are in agreement with that? Is there anything else in the budget we need to look at further.

Westman would like to talk about roads. Would like to see moving forward the unspent amount from uncompleted roads transferred over. \$600,000 is a more realistic figure.

Kingsley said that in CIP, uncompleted projects roll over into the next year, unlike GF. So you want to do a transfer? Is everyone in agreement? **Yes.**

Kingsley closes Budget Public Hearing for board discussion on FY2025 budget at 8.26 p.m.

Kingsley opens Budget Public Hearing for public comments on FY2025 budget at 8:26 p.m.

Dave Daly - We never had increases like this in industry. Thank you for understanding. I like Lynda and Bill, but a 7% increase is just too much. Saw 4-5 bids out for parking lot. Do we do same for snow plowing. Our snow plowing budget seems high.

Kingsley closes Budget Public Hearing for public comments on FY2025 budget at 8.29 p.m.

Kingsley closes FY2025 Public Budget Hearing at 8.30 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Donna Whitney, Deputy Clerk