

**VILLAGE OF EPHRAIM
VILLAGE BOARD MEETING MINUTES
THURSDAY, OCTOBER 17, 2024 – 1:00 P.M.
9996 WATER STREET- EPHRAIM VILLAGE HALL**



Action Items:

The consensus of the Village Board members present was to remove the garbage disposal from the 2025 Budget request for Other Improvement Outlay 100-20-55200-830 thereby leaving the total request at sixty-nine thousand five hundred dollars (\$69,500).

The consensus of the Village Board was to proceed with the 2025 Budget request for Other Improvement Outlay 100-20-55200-830. Funding shall come from the budgeted thirty-one thousand dollars (\$31,000) in line item 100-20-55200-830, nineteen thousand dollars (\$19,000) from the Capital Reserve Village Hall Account, and twenty thousand dollars (\$20,000) from 100-10-51601-210 Other Contractual Services – Hall Maintenance to be split between the 2024 and 2025 budgets (\$10,000/ budget year) for the 100-1051601-210 budget line item.

The consensus of the Village Board was to increase wastewater fees by ten percent (10%).

T. Nelson moved, Meacham seconded to approve and amend the 2025 Budget and set the Village of Ephraim budget public hearing for Tuesday, November 12th, 2024 at 7:00 PM, all ayes. Motion carried.

T. Nelson moved, Meacham seconded to adjourn, all ayes. Motion carried.

Present: Matt Meacham, Carly Mulliken, Ken Nelson, Tim Nelson, and Dr. Michael McCutcheon - President.

Staff: Brent Bristol -Village Administrator, Justin MacDonald - Fire Chief/ Maintenance Manager, and Kim Roberts - Deputy Clerk.

Guests online: None.

Guests in person: None.

1. **Call to Order:** McCutcheon called the meeting to order at 1:00 PM.

2. **Quorum:** A quorum was present for the meeting.

3. **Changes to the agenda:** There were no changes to the agenda.

4. **Visitors' Comments:** There were no comments.

5. **Administration:**

a. **Discussion and consideration regarding the 2025 Budget:**

Bristol reviewed the 2025 budget starting with General Administration. Bristol noted that State Shared Revenue, line item 100-10-43410, had an increase in new revenue which resulted in a minimal levy increase. Additionally, State Transportation Aid 100-10-43530 also had increased funding which does not have a matching expense account therefore the funds go into Capital Reserves.

Bristol noted that within the General Fund there had been an increase in expenses in 2024 resulting in a higher budget amount for 2025 for Computer Supplies/Expenses 100-10-51400-334. He reviewed that a new server had to be purchased, an upgrade for the accounting software, and increased IT support to address cyber security risk concerns. Bristol added that the insurance company is driving home the need for increased computer security therefore the need for IT support will not be going down in the future.

Bristol provided an overview of the Maintenance – Expense – Street Reconstruction – Equipment Outlay line items. He noted that these capital categories have been used to purchase the wood chipper, hall security keypad system, and skid steer which accounts for the large expenditures. All expenses whether in the annual budget or financed using road funds, capital reserve, or room tax when realized need a home within our chart of accounts. When the expenses are in a category without a normal budget, they are expensed in the proper accounts and then addressed after the audit with our annual

budget amendments. The budget amendments formally move money from room tax, PRAT, or Capital Reserve to the general fund to pay for these expenses.

Bristol continued reviewing the 2025 budget. He discussed the proposed seven percent (7%) increase across the board for Wastewater fees and Worker's Compensation Insurance.

Mulliken inquired about the variability of DNR land payment from year to year.

Bristol noted that the payment variability for 100-10-43660 State Payment in Lieu of Taxes (DNR Land Payment) was consistent but it was unknown why it varied from year to year. He added that he would look into an explanation for the November meeting.

A discussion was held regarding 100-10-51100-100 Board Salaries. Bristol explained that there has not been a raise to Village Board salaries in the ten (10) budget cycles that he has completed as Administrator. He noted that the proposed salary increase is a fair number and that the staff did its due diligence in researching the wide spectrum of Board salaries through the county. K. Nelson and T. Nelson recommended reviewing the research before approving the increase. Both Board members noted that no one serves as a Board member for the money. Mulliken appreciated the acknowledgment of time put in. T. Nelson recommended a comparison of averages of other municipalities to assist the Board with their decision.

Further discussion was held regarding interest income and training and conferences.

MacDonald presented the Fire Department budget. Overall, he noted a 1.1% increase over the 2024 budget. Items of note were an increase to the Assistant Fire Chief's salary to one-half (1/2) of the Chief salary (100-50-52100-301), a one thousand four hundred dollar (\$1,400) increase to the 2025 equipment purchase list (100-50-52200-370), and the first responder overage for 2024 because 2023 was a training year and the training fees are paid in arrears (100-50-52300-377).

A discussion was held regarding the Fire Department 2025 budget. K. Nelson noted that the budget consistently year over year is overbudgeted by about 1/3. He suggested to MacDonald to trim the budget based on what is needed. MacDonald noted that many of the bills aren't in yet for hose testing that was conducted in September and October; it depends on the timing of the bills. He stressed that the budget also needs to account for the inability to forecast the number of fire calls in a given year.

MacDonald reviewed information received from the county regarding the replacement of all portable and mobile radios along with pagers between 2026-2028. MacDonald explained that the County has been working for a few years on developing a replacement system to upgrade the current analog radio system. The current system is old and outdated, and replacement parts are becoming more and more difficult to source. MacDonald explained that the Fire Chiefs received a letter from County Technology Services explaining that the current analog radio safety system will reach the end of its useful life in 2028. This will require all new equipment across the Door County system as well as the construction of new additional tower sites to achieve the required coverage percentages per municipality. The total project cost is estimated at \$26.3 million. The Village portion of the replacement radio system, at 2024 pricing, is three hundred and seven thousand dollars (\$307,000). MacDonald noted that the Village is part of the user system and based on 2024 pricing the complete replacement of all portable and mobile radios along with pagers, our rolling stock of what is currently in use. He noted that the County was unable to provide specifics as to sourcing and models for the radio equipment along with the pricing list. The pricing breakdown is as follows:

- 30-Portable Radios \$183,300.00 - \$6,110 each- (Carried by Firefighter and EMS providers as the main source of fireground communication)
- 20-Mobile Radios \$99,000 - \$4,950 each- (Used in all Fire Department vehicles)
- 25-Pagers \$25,000 - \$1,000 each - (Main source of alerting Firefighter and EMS providers of a Call)

A discussion was held regarding the replacement radio system. Discussion included bulk pricing, an early 2025 meeting with the county, fire chiefs, and municipalities, grant money, and the need for more

information to start planning for the expense.

MacDonald reviewed the 2025 Public Works budget. MacDonald reviewed line item 100-20-53310-311 Vehicle Maintenance. With three (3) trucks, a tractor, and a skid steer which are an aging fleet he increased the budget for maintenance. Further, the fuel line item was also increased. He went on to discuss the 100-20-55200-830 Other Improvement Outlay line item. The items requested for Other Improvement Outlay: Village Hall Garbage Disposal, New Village Hall Commercial Dishwasher, Installation of fencing around the wellhead at the Village Hall, pull behind blower, backpack blower, repairs to the Village Hall, brush grabber for skid steer, and post hole digger for skid steer. Other pending projects were also added to this line item including the request for new windows, a door, and a split unit for the library. With the inclusion of the project items, the Other Improvement Outlay line item totaled seventy thousand dollars (\$70,000).

A discussion was held regarding the Public Works budget. 100-20-55301-220 Street Maintenance - Mowing was discussed as to whether it was necessary to mow along roadways. It was determined after a brief discussion that this was an important safety issue to see deer.

A more in-depth conversation was held regarding the line item 100-20-55200-830 Improvement Outlay requests and how they could be paid for. Meacham noted that the initial items requested (Village Hall Garbage Disposal, New Village Hall Commercial Dishwasher, Installation of fencing around the wellhead at the Village Hall, pull behind blower, backpack blower, repairs to the Village Hall, brush grabber for skid steer, and post hole digger for skid steer) totaling thirty-one thousand dollars (\$31,000) was already budgeted for. He suggested taking the remaining balance out of the Village Hall Capital Reserve account for the library windows, door, and split unit. Bristol reviewed the intent of the Village Hall Capital Reserve account which had been earmarked for a roof, furnace, tables, and chairs. He noted that there was a line item within the Administrative budget General Buildings – Hall 100-10-51601-210 earmarked for maintenance efforts for the Village Hall. He added that ten thousand dollars (\$10,000) was budgeted and there was potentially an option to split the cost between the 2024 and 2025 budget years to contribute towards the maintenance project for the Library. T. Nelson noted that the replacement roof will be an expensive project and we are not even close to being able to cover the cost. He suggested considering putting more aside annually. MacDonald added that there had been repairs completed to the roof four (4) or five (5) years ago. K. Nelson suggested obtaining a current quote for the roof and then setting a target for how much should be budgeted annually for the roof replacement. T. Nelson cautioned the Board against putting in a garbage disposal with the old pipes in the Village Hall building. It will lead to problems, he said.

The consensus of the Village Board members present was to remove the garbage disposal from the 2025 Budget request for Other Improvement Outlay 100-20-55200-830 thereby leaving the total request at sixty-nine thousand five hundred dollars (\$69,500).

The consensus of the Village Board was to proceed with the 2025 Budget request for Other Improvement Outlay 100-20-55200-830. Funding shall come from the budgeted thirty-one thousand dollars (\$31,000) in line item 100-20-55200-830, nineteen thousand dollars (\$19,000) from the Capital Reserve Village Hall Account, and twenty thousand dollars (\$20,000) from 100-10-51601-210 Other Contractual Services – Hall Maintenance to be split between the 2024 and 2025 budgets (\$10,000/ budget year) for the 100-1051601-210 budget line item.

A discussion was held regarding capital reserve accounts, unassigned fund balances, and capital reserve allocations for the airport. It was determined that more information was required to ascertain if it was necessary to continue to save for the airport if they were reporting they were solvent. Meacham requested that a review be completed of the amounts being contributed to the Village Hall, Gazebo, and Playground Capital Reserve Accounts. He felt that more money needed to be contributed to the Village Hall than the Gazebo and Playground.

Rasmusson presented the Wastewater and Water budgets. He noted that the auditors recommended a seven percent (7%) increase in fees. Otherwise, he noted there were not a lot of changes to the budget

year over year. He discussed the unknown expense of sludge hauling facing the plant. Sturgeon Bay will not be accepting sludge next year which will result in an unknown increase to the sludge expense. He noted that water testing fees will remain the same in order to be in line with other communities' fee schedules.

A discussion was held regarding the Wastewater and Water Test Fund budgets. T. Nelson inquired if it was possible to expand the plant's capability for water testing to include lead, nitrate, and arsenic. After a short discussion, it was determined that the equipment to expand testing was out of reach monetarily for plant operations. Rasmusson added that he will continue to research and for the foreseeable future, he will continue to offer the service and ship samples out for testing for those tests that they do not complete in-house.

Further discussion included rates concerning how the facility plan amendment project would be financed. The Board discussed consistent rate increases annually to avoid large increases over a few years. Additionally, the financing discussion included rates, sewer main and line fees added to property tax bills, financing, and the replacement fund. T. Nelson noted that he didn't want to see customers overcharged but that the Board needed to look at the rational next step as costs increase and the need to start saving for future expenses such as the facility plan amendment project.

The consensus of the Village Board was to increase wastewater fees by ten percent (10%) excluding water testing fees.

Bristol discussed the Marinas and Moorings committee review of their 2025 budget. They decided to increase transient rates for 2025.

Bristol reviewed the Capital Reserve Accounts. He reviewed current balances, 2024 contributions, and how the list is combined from the more detailed schedule. He discussed long-term planning on bigger items that will need replacement in the future which requires some goals and real numbers on large items. He recommended working on obtaining information to make adjustments so that the information is ready for the next budget cycle.

Bristol explained that for 2025, the mill rate decreases from three dollars and seventy-eight cents (\$3.78) to three dollars and seventy-six cents (\$3.76) reflecting a -0.592% decrease.

b. Discussion and consideration regarding setting the 2025 Budget for Public Hearing:

T. Nelson moved, Meacham seconded to approve and amend the 2025 Budget and set the Village of Ephraim budget public hearing for Tuesday, November 12th, 2024 at 7:00 PM, all ayes. Motion carried.

6. **Visitors' Comments:** There were no visitors' comments.

7. **Adjournment:**

T. Nelson moved, Meacham seconded to adjourn, all ayes. Motion carried.

*Recorded by,
Kim Roberts – Deputy Clerk*