

Minutes of A Special Meeting Of The Board Of Trustee For The Village Of University Park, Will And Cook Counties Illinois, Held Saturday October 17, 2009 At #90 Town Center Drive, In The Village Of University Park.

A. CALL TO ORDER

Mayor McCowan called this special meeting of the Board of Trustees to order at 8:50 a.m.

B. ROLL CALL

Mayor:	Alvin R. McCowan	Present
Trustees:	Sharon A. McGuire	Present
	Oscar H. Brown, Jr.	Present
	Vivian E. Covington	Present
	Keith Griffin	Present
	Joseph E. Roudez, III	Present
	Larry B. Brown	Present

Also present were Interim Village Manager/Finance Director David Sevier, Fire Chief Charles Exner, Police Chief Mel Easley, II, Public Works Director Jerry Townsend, Parks & Recreation Director Robert Graham, Golf Club General Manager/PGA Paul Blockoms, IT Director Deryl Bolton, Cable Studio Manager Christel Allen, and Village Clerk Dorothy R. Jones.

Mayor McCowan preference the meeting stating that this is a special meeting of the Board of Trustees to work on passing the budget, and while the public is invited, there would be no participation from the public. He noted that a public hearing and several meetings and workshops had been held where the public was invited to participate. However, today, he would not take questions or comments from the public.

C-1: First, Second And Third Readings On An Ordinance Adopting The Budget For All Corporate Purposes Of The Village Of University Park, Will And Cook Counties, Illinois, In Lieu Of The Appropriation Ordinance For The Fiscal Year Commencing On The First Day Of May, 2009, And Ending On The Thirtie4th Day Of April, 2010

Trustee Covington moved, Trustee Roudez seconded a motion that the Board approves this Budget Ordinance.

Trustee Covington deferred her comments until later in the meeting.

Trustee McGuire asked Manager Sevier to explain the changes to the budget that have occurred since the last meeting and discussions.

Mr. Sevier stated that the changes are as follows: a) At the request of Trustee Oscar Brown, Department Heads and exempt employees would receive a 2.5% salary increase; b) The position of Communications Director had not been approved by the Board, therefore that position has been removed from the budget. However, the Cable Studio Manager has been moved into that position and will report directly to the Village Manager, as the Board requested. That individual is the only employee who will receive more than a 2.5% salary increase. c) The Golf Club budget was reduced 15% over last year's expenditures, as discussed with the Board, as opposed to the 20% that was requested. d) The composition of the IT Department was discussed at the last meeting and a majority of the Board agreed that the Information Technology Department would consist of two (2) full-time and one (1) part-time employee, therefore those adjustments were made to the budget.

Trustee McGuire asked that her previous concern relating to the large salary increases received by some exempt employees and department heads in 2008 – 09 be addressed, and that those individuals be returned to their previous salary, then given raises in line with raises received by other exempt employees for 2008/09, and for 2009/10 add the 2.5%.

Manager Sevier reminded the Board that the raises in question were approved by the Board, and were given in accordance with performance evaluations of those individuals, and are written into the evaluations of those individuals. Therefore, he feels that if the Board wants to consider this move, then another type of evaluation of those individuals would have to be done to inform them what they have done since that time that would not warrant them the raises. Essentially, he needs to know how to tell the employees that their raises are being taken from them, and that they are not doing their jobs, when they are doing a great job.

Trustee McGuire commented that during these economic times, other governmental agencies have cut salaries, not necessarily based on evaluations, but they may not have the money, or as part of being fiscally responsible or looking into the future to forecast possible shortfalls. She asked Mr. Sevier how other communities were addressing those issues.

Manager Sevier referred to a survey that he was done by SSMMA that addressed actions taken due to the Current Economic Conditions as of September 22, 2009. The survey dealt with Frozen Pay Increases; Laid Off Workers, or Staff; Negotiated Reduction In Salary Or Benefits; Eliminated Positions; and Instituted Hiring Freeze.

Mr. Sevier noted that a majority of the communities had not taken any adverse action based on the economy, except for instituting a hiring freeze. He also shared a survey, also done by SSMMA that compared salaries in this community to salaries in other surrounding communities. He stated that the survey basically shows that the salaries of University Park Department Heads are below the average salaries of the communities surveyed.

Trustee Covington asked if the Cable Studio Supervisor had been moved to Director. Mr. Sevier stated that that person was bumped to Studio Manager, but a further move would be at the discretion of the Board. However, a move to Director would have to include a double digit salary increase, with a high double digit percentage.

Trustee Covington asked if she could do a presentation of IT at the Town Hall Meeting. She also stated that the previous Village Manager had done a comparison of department head salaries and gave raises prior to his leaving the Village of University Park. She asked if the person who was the Communications Director be transferred to IT as a part-time position, and the other position as full-time.

Manager Sevier stated that a decision had not been made as to which particular individuals would fill those positions.

Mayor McCowan commented that based on the surveys presented, which shows that Department Head Salaries is within range of surrounding communities, he hopes this gives some clarity to the issue of Trustee McGuire.

Trustee Oscar Brown stated that even though the salary for Markham is not listed, the salary for the Police Chief is \$55,000 - \$75,000 per year. He noted that the salary for our Police Chief is approximately \$10,000.00 more than other Chiefs in communities comparable to our size, as of today.

Manager Sevier stated that the figures he took from the survey were compared with six surrounding communities, and the average salary is higher than what we offer to our department heads. He also noted that these surveys do not reflect tenure, or the value of experience, education, and expertise that each department head brings with them.

Trustee Griffin stated that he has concerns that the IT Department pays Civic Plus for six months and also pays for a different website for the Golf Club and someone else to host our website, and asked why we need two different companies and the IT Department, and why do we need a webmaster.

IT Director Bolton explained some aspects of the IT Department, the process for maintaining the information technology service in the village, and how other companies are needed to build and manage their websites. However, the IT Department in University Park administers the website; update changes as they are needed, sometimes daily. This is done in other municipalities, and the money referred to is for building the equipment, by specialized companies.

Trustee Larry Brown stated that we need to think corporately, but remember that we are dealing with public funds, and noted that his concern is with the amount of the “bumps” that some employees received in 2008-09. He stated that he does not see step increases in these salary proposals.

Amendment to Main Motion:

Trustee McGuire moved, Trustee Covington seconded a motion to amend the main motion to include taking a look at the 2008-09 department heads salaries, that they be reduced back to their original salaries prior to the big bumps and, given the same percentage of increment in increase that was given other employees got that year, and move on to giving the present 2.5% increase.

Trustee Covington asked if the reduction in salaries of affected employees as suggesting is legal, because if the Board approved those increases based on performance, she questions whether we can now take them away.

Trustee Roudez voiced his concern that continued vital services are provided for our residents, and a reduction in salary would not be warranted, therefore he would propose a true 2.5% increase with a freeze on salaries.

Secondary Amendment to Main Motion:

Trustee Roudez moved, Trustee Larry Brown seconded a motion to amend the first amendment to the main motion to read: That the Board ensures a true 2.5% salary increase across the board for department heads; institute an 18 month freeze on those salaries; and do not reduce department head salary increases given in 2008-09.

Trustee Larry Brown requested clarity on the motion of Trustee McGuire.

Mayor McCowan explained the essences of Trustee McGuire’s motion and noted that basically if approved would rescind actions taken by the Board after surveys and evaluations were done to approve those salary increases.

Trustee Oscar Brown referred to the salaries of the IT Department noting that the salary pool was \$141,000.00 and with a 2.5% increase it went to \$206,000.00, so he asked for clarity on the amount of the one salary that was added to the department.

Manager Sevier responded that he did not have the figures, but insisted that it is less that the Communications Director was paid.

Trustee Larry Brown suggested that the Board take a look at individual salaries, and asked if these figures include starting salaries. He also asked if there are caps on these salaries.

Manager Sevier referred to a comparison salary chart that included those figures for fiscal year 2009 and the proposed 2010 budget with the 2.5% increase. He also explained the process for budgeting salaries, noting that the amount of the annual salary is not necessarily the salary paid, due to the time of the year that the individual hired in. However, one full-time person was added to the IT Department, and the position of Communications Director was eliminated, and a portion of that salary was transferred to IT as a part-time position, with a pro-rated salary.

Mayor McCowan suggested a line item that would indicate forecast salaries.

Manager Sevier stated that there are beginning and ending salaries of all employees, and a copy of all job descriptions are available in his office that reflect those caps on salaries.

Roll Call on Secondary Amendment:

Ayes: Trustees Covington and Roudez.
Nays: Trustees McGuire, Oscar Brown, Griffin and Larry Brown.
Absent: None.

Motion Failed To Carry.

Trustee Oscar Brown asked who was moved to the IT Department, and how would a 2.5% would raise on the salary pool affect that Department. He also asked the salary of the former Communications Director and the salary that individual would be paid under this IT budget.

Manager Sevier responded that the Communications Director position was eliminated and that person was moved to the IT Department, and that salary was \$60,000.00 split equally from Cable and Communications, listed under community relations. He stated that they are looking at that salary, but would be reduced by at least \$12,000.00.

Trustee Covington commented on the individual who was handling the information technology for this village, prior to the establishment of our own IT Department, and the enormous amount of money that the village paid for substandard service and equipment. She noted the savings to the village under this IT Administration, which equals hundreds of thousands of dollars.

Trustee Larry Brown asked if, according to the salary schedule, the part-time and full-time employee in IT would make the same amount of money.

Manager Sevier responded that there is a cap on salaries that cannot be exceeded, however, how those salaries would be split will be determined by the IT Director.

Trustee Larry Brown moved, Trustee Roudez seconded a motion to amend the first amendment to the main motion to read: That the Board approves a motion to ensure a true 2.5% salary increase; institute a 24 month freeze on those salaries; and do not reduce department head salary increases given in 2008-09.

Trustee Oscar Brown moved, Trustee Roudez seconded a motion to amend the previous amendment to the main motion to read: That the Board approves a 2.5% Department Salary Pool Increase; institute a 24 month freeze on salaries; and do not reduce salary increases given in 2008-09 to those affected employees.

Manager Sevier asked permission for the Fire and Police Chiefs to speak to the adverse effect this freeze and salary reduction would have on their departments.

Fire Chief Charles Exner commented that recently the Board of Trustees passed a 12.75% increase for the next three years for the Fraternal Order of Police, and passed a 14% increase for the International Association of Firefighter 3661. He stated that he would gladly stay at the salary that he is at, but asked does the Village Board expect him to put in over 260 days a year, come back for calls, manage the department, and attend meeting, when he can make the same salary working only 156 days a year, and be guaranteed at least 4 – 4 1/2% annual increases for the next few years. He further stated that he feels that raises given to all employees are warranted, however, he feels that the total increase for department heads equals less than \$20,000.00.

Police Chief Mel Easley commented that he takes pride in his position and the police department, noting that he came here to raise his son, following a successful professional football career, and leaving another productive job. He has worked hard, came up through the ranks to his current position; loves this community, and has always been involved in this community. He stated that all the things that he and his team in the police department have done has resulted in reducing the crime rate by 25%, which is the largest decline in crime in Will County and possibly the State, and they have worked hard to keep this community safe. However, he must say that it hurts when there are efforts to take away money that he has earned, and leaves him to ask if he did something wrong.

IT Director Deryl Bolton commented on the progress and accomplishments of that department, noting that under his administration they negotiated all contracts and he reported on a recent contract with Chicago Office Technology which saves the Village over \$136,000.00 for the next three years. Additionally, they issued a check for IT in the amount of \$36,000.00, and they will save \$62,000.00 with Verizon this year. He noted that they are working hard on things that may not be visible on the surface. He expounded on the services that the IT Department is doing and invited the Board to contact him if there are questions or concerns.

Public Works Director Jerry Townsend voiced his concerns with the proposed reduction in salaries. He stated that it is disheartening to think that he left a position in another community where he was guaranteed a 4.5% increase every six months, to come work in his community and now hear that the Board might want him to work for less than the salary that he was hired in, and what he gave. He noted that that under his administration the moral in public works is high, vital work is being done, education has been stepped up and it has been instilled in the employees that they are professionals, and he will continue to serve this community. Additionally, he stated that he would like to sit down with each Board member and discuss his vision for the department and the village.

Parks & Recreation Director Robert Graham commented that while he is one of the most recently hired department heads he takes pride in work that he does and the expertise that he brings to the parks & recreations department. He does not mind the long hours and extended workweek, and has committed himself to this community and working with the Board to take that department to where the Board wants to take it. He invites Village Officials to discuss their vision with him. Golf Club Manager Paul Blockoms commented that during his year and half tenure things at the golf club have increased. Noting that according to the golf digest, rounds of golf played have decreased by 5%. However, rounds at University Golf Club have increased since last and other positive changes have occurred. He commented that he spends an average of twelve hours per day, seven days per week, is dedicated to his profession, and like other department heads, he too, came to University Park because he saw an opportunity to bring his expertise and make a difference in this community. He commented on the opening of the driving range and his vision to establish a Junior Golf Foundation that would make a difference in this community.

Mayor McCowan commented that he felt it was important that the affected Department Heads had an opportunity to speak at this meeting. He also stated that if we look at surrounding communities, we would be proud of the attributes, commitment, professionalism and dedication that we have in our Department Heads, and asked that the Board consider that we are not a community where the government is coming in and taking over operations, we are stable and safe and we need to pay employees for the services that they provide to this community.

Trustee Larry Brown commented on his years of service to this community and his charge now to be fiscally responsible and pass a sensible budget, while providing valuable services to residents. He also commented on the more than six hundred thousand dollars in overtime for the village.

Mayor McCowan clarified the comment of Trustee Brown relating to the overtime in the police department and noted that a major portion of those funds were budgeted for full-time employees, but positions were not filled. Therefore, the overtime budget was much less.

Trustee McGuire commented that she realizes that sometimes compromises are appropriate, because not everyone will have their issues addressed, or get what they want. She commented on the educational profession and compared salaries of University Park Department Heads to Educators and noted that apparently the educators do the job to help our children, and not because of the money, because most of them do not make the type of money that we pay our Department Heads. She further stated that she does not feel that employees should work and not be given some type of annual increase; therefore she would not support a freeze of salaries.

Trustee Covington commented on her volunteering in the village prior to becoming an elected official, where she brought with her an IT background, and her desire to bring this community into the technical age. She commented on the advancements of our cable studio and services that they provide us and other communities; the number of computers and printers previously in the village, and the current configuration; accessibility of high speed internet; and the money we receive from Comcast for assistance with studio productions; the enormous amount of money saved by the IT Department by being fiscally responsible and negotiating sensible contracts, compared to the money that was given away previously. She voiced her frustration with the status of the budget process.

Trustee Griffin commented that he has wanted to go to different departments to see what is going on, but was told by the Mayor that he could not talk with them because when he left the Board meetings, his authority ended. He stated that he agrees with Trustee Larry Brown that he is here because he wants to make a difference, but something has to be done.

Trustee Oscar Brown commented that he appreciates the work that all employees and departments do for this village, and personally would like to pay them more, but he realizes that this would not be responsible. Because, he is charged with passing a budget that is responsible, and acceptable to the public. He also stated that he would not support rescinding the raises given in '08/'09, because if they deserved the raise then, they deserve it now, but do not feel that they deserve to have their department salary pool go over 2.5%.

Roll Call On Secondary Amendment of Trustee Oscar Brown:

That the Board approves a 2.5% Department Salary Pool Increase; institute a 24 month freeze on salaries; and do not rescind salary increases given in 2008-09 to those affected employees.

Ayes: None.
Nays: Trustees McGuire, Oscar Brown, Covington, Griffin, Roudez, and Larry Brown.
Absent: None.

Motion Failed To Carry.

Trustee Oscar Brown moved, Trustee McGuire seconded a motion to amend the previous amendment to the main motion to read: That the Board approves to limit the Department Salary Pool Increase overall to 2.5% over the 2008/09 budget; and do not rescind the salary increases given in 2008-09 to those affected employees.

Trustee Larry Brown asked if this budget could be amended later, if economic situations improved, and then give additional raises to these individuals.

Trustee Griffin asked how they would get an item on the agenda to amend the budget later if they desired to do so.

Mayor McCowan responded that they would make the request to him.

Trustee Covington stressed the importance that raises are performance driven, not just across the board.

Ayes: Trustees McGuire, Oscar Brown, Covington, and Mayor McCowan.
Nays: Griffin, Roudez, and Larry Brown.
Absent: None.

After clarity on the motion, Trustee Roudez withdrew his previous Nay vote, and voted affirmatively for the motion. Therefore, the roll call is as follows:

Ayes: Trustees McGuire, Oscar Brown, Covington, Roudez, and Mayor McCowan.
Nays: Trustees Griffin, and Larry Brown.
Absent: None.

Motion To Approve Carried.

Trustee Oscar Brown moved, Trustee Larry Brown seconded a motion to amend the previous amendment to the main motion to read: That the Board approves a motion to reduce the overall budget of the Golf Course by another 20%.

Interim Manager Sevier commented that to reduce that budget by another 20% would result in closing the facility for the entire winter season, because of the monthly overhead cost associated with opening the doors.

Golf Club Manager Paul Blockoms commented that they are currently working on plans to open only for special, revenue generating event during the winter months. He also commented on the unemployment cost to the village for permanent staff, and the possibility of losing valuable employees if the facility is closed for the entire winter.

Trustee Oscar Brown asked if closing the Pro-shop would affect the Golf Club business.

Golf Club Manager Paul Blockoms responded to Trustee Brown, noting the adverse effect it would have on business operations.

Trustee McGuire called the previous question.

Ayes: Trustees Oscar Brown and Griffin.
Nays: Trustees McGuire, Covington, Roudez, and Larry Brown.
Absent: None.

Motion Failed To Carry.

Trustee Covington asked if the Cable Studio Manager could be moved to a Director position, and asked if the IT Department would have two full-time and one part-time employee as discussed.

Manager Sevier reminded the Board that to move Cable Studio Manager to a Director would result in a high double-digit increase. However, the manager would function in a Director's position and report directly to the Village Manager.

Trustee Oscar Brown moved that the Board approves the main motion to eliminate the Developers' contract from the budget.

Manager Sevier responded that the contract expired in July, and only two payments had been made. In this budget is a contingency for a developer, and the funds could be transferred.

After clarity, Trustee Oscar Brown withdrew his motion.

Trustee Griffin moved, Trustee Larry Brown seconded a motion to amend the main motion to eliminate the Lobbyist contract from the budget.

Trustee McGuire stated that she feels that we do need a Lobbyist; however she wants to look at other Lobbyists, and also take a look at what we need from a Lobbyist, because we have received a lot of money and we need to plan for expending those funds.

Ayes: Trustees Covington, Griffin, and Larry Brown.
Nays: Trustees McGuire, Oscar Brown, Roudez, and Mayor McCowan.
Absent: None.

Motion Failed To Carry.

Roll Call On Main Motion As Amended to include:

That the Board approves to limit the Department Salary Pool Increase overall to 2.5% over the 2008/09 budget.

Ayes: Trustees McGuire, Oscar Brown, Covington, and Roudez,
Nays: Trustees Griffin, and Larry Brown.
Absent: None.

Motion To Approve Carried

Ordinance Number 2009 – 37.

D. ADJOURNMENT

Trustee Roudez moved, Trustee Covington seconded a motion to adjourn this special meeting of the Board of Trustees at 11:34 a.m.

Motion to Adjourn Carried By Voice Vote.

Respectfully Submitted,

Dorothy R. Jones, CMC
Village Clerk

/drj