

Chairman Jim Burns called the April 10, 2018 Public Hearing meeting of the Hinckley Township Board of Trustees to order at 6:34 p.m. Present were Trustees Jim Burns, Becky Lutzko and Ray Schulte, Fiscal Officer Martha Catherwood, 18 residents and 1 reporters.

Mr. Burns stated that the reason for the public hearing is to consider the levy of an annual motor vehicle license tax, pursuant to R.C. § 4504.18, upon the operation of motor vehicles on the public roads and highways in the unincorporated territory of Hinckley Township. The tax shall be at the rate of five dollars (\$5.00) annually per motor vehicle on all motor vehicles the owners, which reside in the unincorporated area of Hinckley Township.

Mr. Burns thanked the audience for attending, asking those individuals who would like to speak to do so respectfully, to stay on topic and to limit their time to four minutes. He said that the time limit might be increased depending on the number of individuals who speak.

Resident David Manley (Bethany Lane) asked if the tax would be assessed on anyone who resides in the township who owns a vehicle. The trustees clarified that the vehicle must be registered with a Hinckley address for the tax to be applied. Mr. Manley agreed that additional monies need to go towards road maintenance, he questioned, though, whether future trustees could decide to use the license tax revenue for the General Fund. He was assured that the funds could not go toward General Fund, or any other funds, that were not to improve Hinckley Township roads. Mr. Manley feels that the trustees should address the road repair problem comprehensively, target where funds are needed and then move forward. Trustee Burns replied that he is working on a long-range plan to identify more specific road maintenance funding requirements.

Trustee Schulte asked Mr. Manley if he felt that the revenue collected from the proposed tax would be beneficial if it were used to service the debt on OPWC road repair loans such as the one recently approved in excess of \$400,000.00. Ms. Lutzko asked if Mr. Manley would object to the tax if the trustees were to obtain another OPWC loan of this size and use the funds to service the debt. Mr. Manley replied that he does not want the money to go into the General Fund and he would like to see a plan.

Resident Linda Mills asked the trustees how much money was in the General Fund. The response was approximately \$1.2 million. She stated she felt that this should be used for road repairs. Mr. Burns replied that a portion of the General Fund is used for roads. Mrs. Mills inquired as to what the General Fund is used for. Fiscal Officer Catherwood listed several major expenses, including employee salaries and medical insurance, property insurance, improvement of sites and township building and equipment expenses. Ms. Lutzko replied that there was a public meeting at the beginning of the year where the entire budget was reviewed in detail prior to formal approval for 2018.

Resident Joseph Garcello (Northgate Drive) expressed concern that the license tax request was “putting the cart before the horse” and that any funds collected from such tax would do nothing but offset current General Fund appropriations for road maintenance funding. Trustee Lutzko clarified that the funds can only be used for the stated purpose of township roadway improvements and noted Mr. Garcello’s apparent concern that more funds actually be formally earmarked for road expenditures. Mr. Burns added that all the money from the request will go towards the roads and when he is finished with his analysis, it will be

shared with the public. Trustee Lutzko said that, to date, the road superintendent has made general projections and priorities have been identified and initiated.

Resident Chuck Naegle (Mattingly Road) indicated he had spoken at the last Public Hearing held a week ago and reiterated his point that the funds should be applied for from the State. He added that the Township should use all of its money and, maybe, the State will see our need and fund our projects. He said that he had participated in the roadway construction of Brookside Estates and felt it was subpar. He observed the construction of the township's newest street at The Ledges of Stone Creek subdivision and inquired as to the process and the inspections. He did not feel the road was installed properly. A discussion was held as to the Medina County inspection process and township subdivision requirements. Mr. Naegle stated he had given photos to Mr. Schulte from the installation of The Ledges at Stone Creek roadway and asked if the roadway had been soil-stabilized. Mr. Schulte said he had spoken to the developers and they assured him the installation was done correctly and in compliance with all Medina County and Hinckley Township standards. Mr. Naegle concluded by saying that Hinckley Township had voted down the same scenario twenty-five years ago.

A conversation ensued as to township funding. Despite an average account balance in excess of \$4 million dollars, approximately 60% of the funds are levy-approved and can only be used for their specific purpose, which is fire and police. Ms. Lutzko said that the General Fund services many needs, which were explained to the attendees. Mr. Naegle inquired as to efforts to obtain grant funding for roadwork. Mr. Schulte replied that the trustees are pursuing OPWC funds, either a grant or loan. Mr. Schulte cited Bethany Lane as an example of a current need stating, "they are fed up", but there are a limited amount of funds that can be appropriated toward roadwork annually. In response to additional comments Mr. Naegle made, Ms. Lutzko asked Mr. Naegle if he was proposing that the Township instead assess the residents on Bethany Lane the estimated \$1 million it would take to replace their road? Mr. Naegle replied he felt the trustees should do so. Mr. Burns said he felt that the \$47,000.00 in projected revenue from the proposed license tax fixes a problem that would not otherwise get fixed. Ms. Lutzko cited the ability to service the debt on a current and, possibly, future roadwork loans with such revenues.

Resident Natalie Fermanchuk (Galilee Oval) inquired as to why the residents who reside on the roads in need of major repairs were not in attendance to express their support for the tax? Mr. Schulte stated he has asked himself that question. Both Burns and Schulte stated that both Public Hearings were advertised in the newspaper and on the township website. Ms. Fermanchuk expressed her concern that Hinckley was growing too fast, the schools are crowded and that there are more cars on the road. This growth is accelerating despite limited revenue streams. All the trustees agreed that they and the Hinckley Township Zoning Commission are working on closing loopholes that exacerbate growth problems.

Ms. Lutzko reminded the attendees that Hinckley is one of the very few township's in Medina County that do not currently levy this tax. It is just one solution, but that \$5.00 per vehicle can add up to a substantial improvement. She feels this is a small sacrifice to aid in improving township roadways. Ms. Fermanchuk inquired as to how long the tax would be in effect. The trustees responded in perpetuity, as written.

Resident Chris Lewicki asked as to the next step in the process. Mr. Burns replied that the vehicle tax would be voted on by the trustees at a future meeting. He added that if residents disapprove of the vote they have the ability to undertake a referendum per statute.

Resident Craig Stiebeling (Center Road) shared his experience in installing roads in the 1970s. He said many were installed poorly and decayed rapidly. He feels it is unfortunate since present-day taxpayers are left “holding the bag”. He inquired how the trustees are sure roads currently being constructed are done correctly. Mr. Schulte replied that the Medina County Engineers Office provides support and the township road superintendent is onsite. Mr. Schulte added that many of our more recently installed subdivisions are holding up well due to increased inspections and subdivision standard upgrades. He cite Stone Ridge as an example. A discussion was held as to the financial responsibility of the developer to assure quality construction. Ms. Lutzko explained that developers are required to hold a bond for two-years that addresses poor construction and that the township holds the developer responsible for any problems that occur within this period. Mr. Stiebeling asked why the bond could not be held over a longer timeframe. Mr. Burns replied that he is looking into this option. Mr. Burns stated that developers will be held to a high standard. Ms. Lutzko indicated that the township will continue to proceed with applying for loans and grants for roadwork.

Resident Steve Hengeli (Daleside Drive) expressed his support for the tax, stating that he feels that every little bit helps. He recalled township roads in the 1970s and 1980s that were so rough police officers were cautioned to avoid certain roads and not to drive fast in the event of an emergency. He added that we had 26-miles of township roads in the 1980s, today we have 43-miles, the township has had one road levy in its history, and that the trustees have done their best with coming up with solutions and spending money appropriately.

At this time, there being no further comments from the attendees the trustees unanimously moved to adjourn the public hearing at 7:38 p.m.

Meeting minutes approved by:

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