

VILLAGE OF WRIGHTSTOWN
COMMITTEE OF THE WHOLE
MEETING MINUTES

The regular bi-monthly meeting of the Committee of the Whole, of the Village of Wrightstown, was held at Wrightstown Village Hall, 352 High St., Wrightstown, WI, on **Wednesday, April 5, 2023.**

The Pledge of Allegiance was recited.

Roll Call: Present – Village President Dean J. Erickson and Trustees Sue Byers, Mark Leonard, Andy Lundt, Terry Schaeuble, Dan Segerstrom and Julie Sigmund

Also present: Administrator Travis Coenen; Public Works Director Andy Vickman; Clerk/Treasurer Michelle Seidl; Fire Chief Mike Schampers; Police Chief Greg Deike; Residents Joe Coenen, Dan Hurst, Steve Johnson, Dalton Rupiper, Brad Sigmund and Keith Wendlandt

A motion was made by Trustee A Lundt with a second made by Trustee J Sigmund to open the Wednesday, April 5, 2023 Committee of the Whole Meeting. **Motion carried.**

A Motion was made by Trustee A Lundt with a second made by Trustee S Byers to approve the Committee of the Whole Meeting Minutes, as submitted, from Tuesday, March 21, 2023. **Motion carried.**

WRIGHTSTOWN SCHOOL DISTRICT BUDGET

Trustee Sue Byers shared the Wrightstown Community School District Annual Meeting Booklet, dated September 28, 2022, which outlines a 20-year repayment schedule for the referendum debt. For 2023, the scheduled payment amount is \$2,069,618. However, page 8 of the same document, indicates that the actual payment levied for was \$4,635,000. Reducing the 2023 payment down to just the scheduled amount would allow for a mill rate reduction of approximately 29%. A taxpayer, owning a home assessed at \$400,000, would save about \$1,000. Due to the low interest rate of the school district loan, there is very little benefit to paying off the referendum debt early.

Village President Dean Erickson noted that the Village Board and the Wrightstown Community are waiting for an answer as to why this route was chosen.

Trustee Sue Byers stated that she is very angry with the lack of communication and transparency regarding the Administration's plan to rapidly pay down the referendum loan. As educators, they should have been committed to making sure that the Community was fully aware of the commitment they were being asked to take on, prior to asking for a referendum vote.

Trustee Andy Lundt stated that because the School District's advertised rate is being calculated on equalized value, and the fact that equalized value is consistently increasing, tax rates should be consistently monitored to prevent harsh impacts.

President Dean Erickson noted that the annual meeting is usually an open agenda meeting and is the best time to address all spending concerns, since it is prior to the budget vote.

Trustee Mark Leonard reminded the Board of Trustees that when the construction project was originally introduced to the supporting communities, the cost to taxpayers was advertised to be an additional \$0.64/thousand of assessed value, over and above the current \$1.87/thousand being paid for the wellness center project loan, which was in its last year of repayment. With the increase in equalized value of approximately 30% in the last 3 years, he questioned why there had even been discussions regarding the possibility of raising the “interim rate” from \$8.85 to \$10.

A review of the September 28, 2022 meeting booklet, in the yearly review written by Business Manager Dan Storch, states that although the tax impact for the construction project was estimated to be \$0.64/thousand of assessed value, the actual increase came in much less at \$0.37. He also highlighted that during the 2021-2022 school year, an additional two years of payments were made to save on interest costs over the life of the loan. Dan did not, however, point out that the 2022-2023 school year budget again included increased debt service payments that exceeded the operational expenses needed for student learning.

Trustee Mark Leonard also stated that he believes the School Board is passing their budget prior to receiving levy numbers from the State, which, if they were waited for, would allow them to better understand final impact. Why is the budget approval being rushed?

Unfortunately, the questions that the School Board is responding to via written letter are not answering any of these questions.

Trustee Sue Byers asked how much additional strain is the School Board putting on the taxpayers, in light of the recent inflation.

Trustee Andy Lundt reiterated that the School Board will need to be responsible with their rate once the Village assessment revaluation is completed this next year. If not done, taxpayers may again be burdened with a large tax increase.

The hope is that the questions being asked have made an impact on the School Board and going into the next budget season, each member will be more aware of the final cost to the taxpayers that they are approving.

An offer was being made to a candidate for the open District Administrator position this evening.

Motion made by Trustee A Lundt with a second made by Trustee D Segerstrom to close the Committee of the Whole meeting. **Motion carried.**

Meeting adjourned at 6:27 p.m.

Michelle Seidl

Clerk/Treasurer

Posted: 04/19/2023 MS