

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 **Tuesday, May 16, 2023**, and was called to order at 6:01 p.m. by Village President Dean Erickson.

The Pledge of Allegiance was recited.

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

Also present: Brian Roebke (Wrightstown Spirit); Administrator Travis Coenen; Public Works Director Andy Vickman; Clerk/Treasurer Michelle Seidl; Fire Chief Mike Schampers; Fire Inspector Nathan Helbing; Police Chief Greg Deike; Residents Jane Cotter, Tony Decker, Sue Frank, Peter Helander, Kathryn Lich, Brad Sigmund and Keith Wendlandt; Jason Gerend from the Town of Buchanan

Motion made by Trustee A Lundt with a second made by Trustee S Byers to open the Tuesday, May 16, 2023 Committee of the Whole Meeting. **Motion carried.**

Motion made by Trustee A Lundt with a second made by Trustee J Sigmund to approve the Committee of the Whole Meeting Minutes from Tuesday, May 2, 2023. **Motion carried.**

Wrightstown School District Initiative to Prepay Debt

Trustee Mark Leonard stated that he submitted an open records request to the Wrightstown School District Administration and Board, asking for documents pertaining to the recent construction project and corresponding bonding. Financial data received from Baird Wealth Management (the district's financial advisory team) and meeting minutes indicate that \$28,700,000 in borrowing was board approved, to be paid back over a 20 year term. The rate impact was to be an increase of \$0.64/thousand. The School Board, by resolution, authorized the district superintendent and business manager to collect the required interest and principal payments annually.

Because the School Board/Administration committed to maintaining a stable mill rate of \$8.85/thousand, and due to increasing equalize values, accelerated debt service payments were able to be made from the resulting additional tax revenues collected.

A resolution authorizing the defeasance of prepayment portions of the Wrightstown Community School District general refunding obligation bonds was passed during the April 17, 2023 meeting, after the first and second pages of the 14 page document were read. The intent of the resolution was to amend prior authorization for the district superintendent and business manager to collect taxes for only the required bond payment amounts. During the same meeting, District Superintendent Carla Buboltz shared that construction of a new middle school is being planned, which is the reason for the early bond pay off push.

At the State mandated annual public meeting held at the end of each September, the Wrightstown School Board voluntarily chooses to pass the following year budget, prior to having contributing municipalities' final equalized value numbers. Then, once finalized equalized value information is received, and during the regular October School Board meeting, an amended budget is passed to include additional debt service payments and contributions for community service spending.

Unfortunately, the tax payer payment impact of holding a stable mill rate of \$8.85/thousand is not discussed. This last year the mill rate of \$8.85/thousand, calculated by the increased equalized value, brought in an additional \$960,000+ in tax revenues for the district.

Trustee Mark Leonard stated that a recall of school board members committed to holding a stable mill rate, for the purpose of prepaying debt, may be in order.

Trustee Sue Byers received an email from School Superintendent Carla Buboltz, inviting her to meet and discuss her concerns, on Friday May 12th. This was the result of a notice Trustee Byers sent with her talking points for upcoming the May 17, 2023 school board meeting. In response, Trustee Byers spelled out a minimum of items that she would like agreed upon before a meeting takes place:

1. Moving forward the school district must pass a needs budget that reflects
 - a. Student costs
 - b. Only the required yearly bond payment
2. Mill rate needs to be lowered to cover only the above outlined expenses
3. Commitment by the school board to make no further debt service prepayments

No feedback has yet been received from Superintendent Buboltz.

Administrator Coenen met with School Board President Nicole Gerend and Business Manager Dan Storch and requested tax relief from the debt defeasance. President Gerend and Business Manager Storch indicated that the topic will be discussed as part of the upcoming 2023-2024 budget planning.

In the current 2022-2023 budget, payments for debt service total \$4,735,000. The actual required bond payments for the year total approximately \$2,200,000. This difference accounts for about ¼ of the school district's mill rate.

Trustee Andy Lundt voiced his concern that the referendum approved bond repayment schedule is not being followed. Although stabilizing the mill rate is usually a good thing, the growing equalized values which are allowing for additional debt service payments to be made, are causing huge tax payment hikes. The \$8.85 mill rate should have been adjusted to offset some of the negative impact. Future referendums may not pass because tax payers will not be able to trust the information that they being given from Wrightstown School District.

Trustee Terry Schaeuble would like to have a face to face meeting, scheduled between the Wrightstown School Board and the Village Board of Trustees, rather than speculating about the reasons behind decisions that are being made.

Trustee Dan Segerstrom reminded everyone that the initiative by Wrightstown School Board to prepay debt is not actionable by the Village Board of Trustees. A Village Board Meeting is not

the place to share concerns. He agrees that there is too much guessing about facts and does not want it to appear that the Board of Trustees has decided to recall members of the school board, as this may be initiated by an individual Village resident. He believes that a face to face meeting would be beneficial.

President Dean J. Erickson feels that it is the responsibility of the Village Board of Trustees to inform the public, as information is received, since answers are not forthcoming from the Wrightstown School Board/Administration.

Trustee Julie Sigmund urged everyone to attend tomorrow evening's school board meeting, beginning at 6:00 p.m. Those wishing to speak must sign up to do so, prior.

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

Meeting adjourned at 6:49 p.m.

Michelle Seidl

Clerk/Treasurer

Posted: 06/07/2023 MS