

**West Vincent Township  
Workshop Minutes  
Board of Supervisors (Draft)  
December 4, 2023 7:00 PM**

**Attendance:** Bernie Couris, Chair, Sara Shick, Vice Chair, Dana Alan, Member, Manager, David Onorato, Township Solicitor, Kathy Shillenn, Township Secretary

Mr. Couris called the meeting to order at 7:05 pm.

Mr. Couris announced that Jacqui Guenther, the township manager, took ill today and is in the emergency room and will not be attending this meeting. A lot of the questions that will be asked tonight the Board will not have the answers to. Notes will be taken, and the questions will be answered at the next meeting.

Ms. Shick announced that she would like to clarify something that was said at the last meeting regarding the police facility. It was said that we didn't have the money; that is not correct. It is because the 2022 audit has not been completed, the township does not have access to grant money. This affects any grant partners.

Ms. Shick also stated that at the last meeting she voted against releasing the budget because it was not complete. That is still the case as not all the funds are addressed in the budget. Ms. Shick stated that she will not vote for a budget with over a \$1,000,000 deficit.

**Old Business:**

**Approve Contract for Jacqui Guenther, Township Manager-** Ms. Shick feels that this contract should be tabled since this is a workshop. It was not advertised that the township would be doing any business tonight. Mr. Onorato stated that the workshops have been advertised as township meetings. Typically, this is a public meeting of the supervisors, and they can conduct any business that comes before them if it is on the agenda in advance of the meeting.

Mrs. Alan stated that the problem she has is that the public was told that it would be shared with the residents and viewed and would be voted on at the next meeting. Mrs. Alan and Ms. Shick feel that the Board of Supervisors should share this contract with the residents at this meeting. Mr. Couris noted that there was one item that was found and needed to be changed.

***Mr. Couris moved to approve the contract for Jacqui Guenther; no second was made.*** This item was tabled until the next Board of Supervisors meeting.

Mr. Couris stated that at the next meeting the Board of Supervisors will share the contract. Mr. Couris then stated that Mrs. Alan had uncovered something earlier that Mr. Couris had overlooked. Mr. Couris says it's a simple fix; it is just limiting any severance compensation to three months. Mr. Onorato can make the change tomorrow and send it to whomever posts on the website. Mrs. Alan also stated that there is another change that mirrors the handbook, which has inconsistencies and questions. It is regarding a 7% contribution into the manager's 401a. Mr. Onorato stated that the township must follow the plan. Mrs. Alan says she is all for a match. The point of a contribution is to save for retirement. Mr. Onorato stated that with respect to the

managers' contract he could add language regarding the 401a plan stating on behalf of the manager as per the township policy. The Board of Supervisors agreed to that language.

Karl Brachwicz stated that this has been going on for awhile and he thinks it's irresponsible to make these changes overnight and post on the website. He wants to see the contract. He questions 7% as this is a contract employee. Compensation should be considered separately from other employees. The manager is not working much harder than the roadmaster, but the manager's salary is twice the roadmaster's salary. That 7% is on top of health insurance, on top of long-term disability and other benefits. Mr. Brachwicz's concerns continued to be discussed.

Julie Braendel asked if there is any part of the manager's duties that Ms. Guenther cannot do because she does not have a contract. Mr. Onorato stated that Ms. Guenther is the interim manager until she is officially appointed. Mrs. Alan stated she was appointed at the last meeting without a contract. Mr. Onorato stated that Ms. Guenther does not have a limit to her duties.

Larry Stone suggested that the Board of Supervisors not consider this contract until the budget and audit is complete.

John Eldridge stated that Ms. Guenther should not have a contract. Mr. Eldridge continued to talk about the treasurer's report and the budget. He feels the budget is poorly done. Mr. Eldridge continued to talk about the shortcomings of Ms. Guenther. Mr. Couris assured Mr. Eldridge that the office staff morale is bolstered by Ms. Guenther, not due to her. She has done everything to support the staff.

Tom Helwig says he's curious about the 8% and changing the document. Mr. Onorato stated that it would be per township policy.

**Appoint Bob Bezgin to Correct the 2022 QuickBooks-** MOTION by Mrs. Alan to appoint Bob Bezgin to correct the 2022 QuickBooks; second by Mr. Couris. Ms. Shick stated again that sure that the Board is conducting business in a non-business meeting. Mrs. Alan stated that the Board is allowed to based on what our Solicitor told them. Ms. Shick stated that for years the Board has told the public that for years during workshops there would be no business conducted. Mrs. Alan asked Mr. Onorato whether the Board could appoint Bob Bezgin tonight. Mr. Onorato stated that this appointment needs to be done in a public meeting.

Barry DiLibero stated that he agrees with Ms. Shick; he believes that Ms. Shick is right. This is a workshop, and it was very clear that a workshop is a workshop; things could be discussed but no business could be done.

John Eldridge asked what credentials Bob Bezgin has. Mr. Couris stated that Mr. Bezgin is a CPA and is the auditor for other townships and the horse show grounds.

Ms. Shick stated she has an issue with appointing Mr. Bezgin.

There being no comments or questions, *motion carries 2-1, with Ms. Shick voting nay.*

Mrs. Alan stated that the Board had a meeting with Mr. Bezgin earlier today along with Barbacane, and Mr. Onorato. The point was to verify that what was planned was sufficient. Mr.

Bezgin's goal was to get the corrections done by the end of the year or it might take a little bit longer. Ms. Shick asked that once Mr. Bezgin is finished, will Barbacane, Thornton complete the audit to which Mr. Couris responded yes.

**New Business:**

**Discussion of the 2024 Draft Budget** – Mr. Couris stated that since Ms. Guenther is not here this evening, the Board can take questions. Mrs. Alan stated that there are a couple of things that are still missing that the Board would like to share. The Board needs to clarify the Capital Funds and the Capital Road funds. Ms. Shick stated that she is concerned about the other funds. Mrs. Alan was talking to Mr. Onorato earlier and he made the point that they are not budget items they are funds. Mrs. Alan would like to see the funds before they are approved.

Jamie McVicker stated that he has many questions, and many things are unusual, most likely due to a different person handling the budget process. Mr. McVicker started with the Real Estate Tax Sheet and reviewed many pages of the budget with many questions and comments. The comments and questions included Cable Franchise Fees, Fines Worksheets, Interest Income Worksheet, Grants, Building Permits Worksheet, Donations, Miscellaneous Receipts and Refunds, Other Reimbursed Expenses, Website Expense, Auditing Service, Board of Supervisors Worksheet, Salary and Benefits, Secretary Salaries and Benefits, Police Worksheet, Police Secretary Salary, Police Supplies, Computer, Telephone, and Copier Expenses, Public Works Small Tools, Healthcare Expense Worksheet, Legal Fees, Engineering Fees, Utilities Electric, Heating Fuel, Water, Fire Hydrants, Custodial Worksheet, Building Codes and Inspector, Codification and Planning Worksheet, Zoning Officer, Highway Maintenance, Boards and Commission Worksheet, Contributions Worksheet, Insurance, Pensions, Debt Services.

John Eldridge asked Mr. Onorato what the rule of thumb for the reserve balance should be for a Second-Class Township. Mr. Onorato stated he is not an accountant; he is not sure. Mr. Eldridge also shared this thoughts on what he thought of the budget.

Julia Braendel stated that clearly when you look at the 2022 and 2023 budget, they were John Granger's numbers. The books for 2022 need to be straightened out and never let what happen over the last couple of years happen again.

Tom Helwig stated that he is stupefied about how screwed up things are, and this screams mismanagement.

Jamie McVicker stated that he likes the way things are broken out; moving forward the township should have a financial advisory board. He reached out many times to look at the budget, and the audit before it was published but was rebuffed. Mrs. Alan asked Mr. Onorato if it was legal to have an Ad Hoc Committee for finances; Mr. Onorato said that it depends on what the committee would be doing.

John Eldridge stated that he reached out to Ms. Guenther and was told she was too busy.

Karl Brachwicz stated that the preliminary budget would be nice if it had been flushed out before it was presented. A Budget is a projection too. Mr. Brachwicz continued to give his thoughts on the budget.

Ms. Shick asked Mr. Onorato what the township's jeopardy is if the township does not have a budget. Mr. Onorato stated that there is the opportunity to adopt the budget in December and open the budget up in January and amend it.

John Bowen stated that he is appalled by the governance that is happening here and has never seen such a poor budget. A treasurer should be hired. Mr. Bowen stated that he sent in a resume for the treasurer position.

Rebecca Sheehan asked if there are any clauses or procedures in the manager contract that can prevent these problems from happening in the future. Also, why can't items be put in the proper place so that they can be found. The expenses should be consistent. There are disparities in the contributions tab for the fire companies. What is the plan to counter the \$11 million deficit? Mr. Eldridge stated that John Granger moved the money around into different funds. Given the state of the budget how much time was spent putting the pictures in the budget.

Tom Helwig stated that he heard suggestions here that are on target. Maybe we should have a bookkeeper working on the treasurer stuff. The salary proposed for the manager should be diminished if a treasurer is hired. Mr. Helwig feels everything should be cut 10%.

Barry DiLibero stated that six years ago under Jacobs and Schneider things were good and it was the first time there was a surplus. When there was a treasurer issue, there was someone who cleaned things up who was Mike Schneider.

**Public Comment on Non-Agenda Items:**

Barry DiLibero asked if the treasurer job is going to be advertised. He heard something about the employee handbook wasn't adopted. Is there a new employee handbook to be adopted.

Karl Brachwicz asked if the township could go back to two meetings a month. Mr. Couris stated no.

Elisabeta Polosca Sheehan stated that her name on her resignation was misspelled. The township should invest in communication skills. There were examples during meetings where people were mistreated and spoken to disrespectfully.

There being no further discussion, the **MOTION** to adjourn was brought forward by Ms. Shick; second by Mrs. Alan. *Motion carries 3-0*

The meeting adjourned at 9:05 PM.

Respectfully Submitted,  
Kathryn Shillenn, Township Secretary