

PROPOSED

**Synopsis of a Work Session
Pittsfield Charter Township Board of Trustees, August 11, 2021
E.A. Jackson Morris Hall, The Robert A. Lillie Service Center
6201 W. Michigan Avenue, Ann Arbor, Michigan 48108**

Members Present: Grewal, Anzaldi, Scribner, Jaffer, Krone
Members Absent: Edwards-Brown, Urda-Thompson
Others Present: Deputy Clerk Lyn Sebestyen, Director Patricia Denig, Director Matt Harshberger, Director Barb McDermott, Director Tracy Watkins, Director Kurt Weiland, Director Billy Weirich, Director Jessica West, Attorney Jim Fink, Planner Ben Carlisle, Park Commissioner Theresa Tupacz, Park Commissioner Stacy Ebron, Park Commissioner Trish Reilly, County Commissioner Caroline Sanders, Mark Pascoe, Tina Lloyd, Jonathan Mazza, Christina Lirones, Jordan London, Mark Lockwood, Scott Munzel, Drew Saunders, Deborah Nystrom, Leslie Wilkins, Alicia Markey, Erin Perry, Missy Stults, Tim Wilhelm, Valerie Brader

Call Working Session to Order

Working Session was called to order at 8:09 p.m.

Agenda Items to be Discussed:

1. FY 2022 Budget Discussion

Supervisor Grewal began that this is a discussion to find solutions that will help improve services and save money without compromising the quality of services to our residents. She acknowledged that the failure of the millage request in May is resulting in budget constraints that need to be addressed. The Supervisor stated that this needs to be a conversation to figure out how the Board of Trustees and the Parks Commission can work together with a new Park Director successfully.

She thanked Director Watkins for putting the numbers and presentation together.

Clerk Anzaldi agreed that there needs to be better communication between the Board of Trustees and the Park Commission. She is not in favor of the Parks and Recreation Department being split, and would like to have a Parks Director be the liaison between the Supervisor's Office and the Park Commission.

Supervisor Grewal interjected that typically Parks and Recreation are combined, and that has worked in the past because she has met with the Parks Commission Chair and Vice-Chair, and the Park Director regularly. She feels that this needs to be reinstated as a practice. She felt that the feedback and input from the Park Commissioners was

very important so that both bodies are satisfied with the administration of the Park and Recreation Department.

Clerk Anzaldi continued that she would like to know what the vision for the merged department would be because the director of the department would need to have the educational background and knowledge of each component of the department.

Supervisor Grewal interjected again that having the Parks and Recreation Department stay as is works but only if there is a commitment from all sides to meet regularly to collaborate.

Clerk Anzaldi continued again by saying that she felt that the coordination was what everyone wanted, and in the best interest of the Township. She asked the Supervisor about the qualifications required to serve as the director of the proposed consolidation of departments into the Economic and Community Development Department. She also asked if there could be a discussion on how relief funds will be spent.

Treasurer Scribner explained the history and mission of the Pittsfield Township Parks and Recreation department and stated she does not agree with splitting the Parks and Recreation department as it would be difficult to maintain continuity and efficiently serve the residents. She stated that the Board supported the Park Commission's resolution urging the posting of the Park Director position, would like to see that Director position posted. She feels the department has suffered without a director's leadership and cited the delay of the Montibeller Park project.

Supervisor Grewal agreed that the recommendation was to hire a Park Director to get things moving forward, however she wants a written commitment from the Park Commission that they will meet on a regular basis to collaborate as she always has in the past.

Treasurer Scribner agreed that there needs to be better communication, but that it has to come from both sides, not just the Park Commission. She believes that it should be the Supervisor.

Clerk Anzaldi recommended having joint working sessions between the Board of Trustees and the Park Commission.

Park Commissioner Theresa Tupacz stated that all Park Commissioners want to have a productive, working relationship moving forward. She stated that Supervisor Grewal's claims that she had several meetings with the Park Director and Park Commissioners is not factual. She added that Supervisor Grewal constantly cancelled meetings and then many times was very disrespectful to people.

Supervisor Grewal interjected that the starting point was one of disrespect and distrust and that if that is what the Commission believes about her, that is fine. That is one of the reasons the existing structure hasn't worked. If the Park Commission feels that she is not showing up to meetings and she is not respectful, then how is that going to change just because there is a new Park Director?

Commissioner Tupacz stated that the Park Commissioners would prefer to meet with the Supervisor and Park Director with a Trustee present to hold everyone accountable.

Supervisor Grewal agreed that the Park Commission could request this, and the Park Director job could be posted with this scenario in mind.

Trustee Krone asked what role the Trustee would play in participating in these meetings.

Commission Tupacz stated that Trustees need to know what is going on, but that the Supervisor does not like direct communication from the Park Commission to Trustees. Additionally, it will hold the Supervisor accountable to be at the meetings.

Supervisor Grewal stated that she has led this Township for 13 years and has not had to be held accountable. She continued that she has been accountable to every resident. She wants the Park Commission to decide if they trust her and want to work with her.

Treasurer Scribner stated that she feels that the Supervisor needs to take an active role in working this out.

Park Commissioner Trish Reilly clarified that the Park Commission is committed to a written solution and will meet to discuss best practices moving forward.

Trustee Krone stated that he would like the Park Commission to decide what communication method would work best for them, and would like to explore all options, including long term solutions.

Clerk Anzaldi voiced concerns regarding delegation of duties should Parks be separated from Recreation. She continued she does not think it is a good idea to combine departments because it would be difficult to find a qualified individual in Utilities, Community Development and Recreation.

Supervisor Grewal described how the Office of Community and Economic Development works at the county level and shared her thoughts on how it could work at Pittsfield Township.

Treasurer Scribner asked what kind of salary a director of Community and Economic Development would make. Director Watkins replied it would be approx. \$80,000-85,000 plus any additional benefits. Treasurer Scribner expressed concern that cost savings would not be achieved by combining departments.

Supervisor Grewal spoke about the coordination, cooperation, and cross-training among current staff within the potential consolidation, and stated that the Township has many qualified staff persons. She feels that all departments work together and there is no severing of collaboration.

Supervisor Grewal continued with the remaining slides depicting spending and possible savings scenarios.

Department Watkins stated that in order to support the Department of Public Safety with the 2.95 millage, the Department of Public Safety will not receive additional funds from the General Fund in 2022, but will gradually receive more money from the General Fund beyond 2022.

Treasurer Scribner asked how the Township can maintain supporting the Department of Public Safety without depleting the General Fund.

Director Watkins shared that an increase in population does not equate with an enormous increase in tax revenue for the Township because of Headlee and Proposal A. It should remain stable, but not be a huge increase in tax revenue.

Supervisor Grewal discussed ways in which Pittsfield Township could spend the American Rescue Plan Act funds/Stimulus money to help divert big one-time expenditures for the next couple of years. She also discussed other upcoming projects that the Township should forecast into the budget.

Treasurer Scribner declared that while she is a big supporter of land preservation, she believes the Township needs to look at upgrading Township facilities and buildings.

Supervisor Grewal said she will have Director Weiland look into what projects our buildings need.

Clerk Anzaldi asked for a list of potential projects to be funded by the stimulus monies.

Director Watkins shared with the Board criteria for how the relief funds may be spent: COVID eligible expenditures, Premium payments, Revenue lost, and Infrastructure. Director Watkins added there is another funding source the Parks Department could apply for to support the Montibeller project.

Supervisor Grewal recommended that the Board hold back \$2.5 million for the Michigan Avenue sewer project to reduce the reliance on bonds.

Supervisor Grewal requested the Board look into possible ways to spend relief funds for 2022.

Director Weirich provided an update on the digital sign displays.

Supervisor Grewal concluded that the Board will meet in another working session in September to pick up on this discussion.

The working session adjourned at 9:49 p.m.

Michelle L. Anzaldi, Clerk
Pittsfield Charter Township

Mandy Grewal, Supervisor
Pittsfield Charter Township

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