

RECORD OF PROCEEDINGS

SPECIAL WORK SESSION APRIL 25, 2023

The Fairfield Township Trustees held a Special Work Session Meeting Tuesday, April 25, 2023, at the Administration Building, 6032 Morris Road, Fairfield Township, OH 45011, for conducting Township business. Meeting was called to order by Mr. Berding at 7:00 PM.

ROLL CALL

Trustee Chairperson, Michael Berding	Present
Trustee Vice Chairperson, Shannon Hartkemeyer	Present
Trustee, Joe McAbee	Present

PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE

TOPIC OF DISCUSSION

- **Compensation Study**

Mrs. Vonderhaar – Mr. Goins and I discussed history to be accurate in what I shared. On January 9th of this year, we had a strategic planning session that was led by Trustee Hartkemeyer with all the department heads that resulted in many good ideas. One of the top concerns was having a competitive salary for employees. With that in mind we spoke with Board Chairman Trustee Berding about the results of the strategic planning, and he brought up that compensation was one of the top items. An additional concern is that we will lose Chief Thomas in less than a year and we want to make sure that the salary we offer is competitive, so we attract some talent. The other things Chuck and I discussed is that we've never been at market value in compensation. Over the past decade we've worked to become contemporary; we have improved buildings, we've improved vehicles, stripping, uniforms, caliber of employees, policies and certain parts of the salaries have been improved; namely, Public Works. There was a pretty aggressive stance taken several years ago so you'll see in this study their jump is less dramatic than some of the other positions because we had already looked to address that at one point. Two meetings ago the Board decided that we would not be using a service to collect compensation data and that we would do that in-house. Chuck Goins took on the task and at the last meeting he gave an update to the Board and that included the comparisons and progress that he had made. At the time, we had 20 or 21 responses of the 23 jurisdictions that Chuck reached out to. Chuck and I met several times to go over comparing the proper positions across the board. Some of the positions that bigger townships have don't apply here. After the last meeting we met with the Board Chair and showed the results that Chuck had come up with, the recommendations that we had discussed. At that time the Board Chair recommended a work session so that the Board could come together and discuss openly in a forum and no action would be taken.

Mr. Goins – A little bit about the study, as Mrs. Vonderhaar mentioned, I shared the list of cities and townships that we sought information from. They were all relatively local and had similar operations. All townships and cities all located within Warren, Butler,

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Hamilton and Clermont Counties. Again, we had 22 respondents provide data back to us and we put together a comprehensive salary study and the proposed adjustments to become more competitive with like jurisdictions. The adjustments weren't intended to lead the area as far as salaries go but just to be more contemporary and competitive.

Mr. Berding – Mr. Goins could you cover what the columns represent?

Mr. Goins - Column 1 represents the jurisdiction. Then we have the county and the title of the position that. The next column is the current annual salaries. The following 2 are range of pay specifically for the township administrator and city manager. That data is not very valuable. Those positions are contract positions, so they don't include a range. The following column is the years in a position. If you look below that table there are a couple smaller tables that include the average for the entire data set. The table below is specific to township data only.

Mr. Berding - Would you explain the average lower contract and the upper?

Mr. Goins – Average lower contract rate, average upper contract rate and average maximum contract rate is simply an average of those 2 columns. Which gives you an average of the lower and upper. The maximum was pulled from the actual current salary. On page 3 if you look at the administrative assistant page the same columns state the average upper and lower range. That's simply totaling and averaging the data in that column from the lower column.

Mr. Berding - I do like the fact that it is broken down by township data only. It's difficult to compete with city employees.

Mrs. Hartkemeyer - I'm very pleased with the data pull. I really like the benchmarking data. This might even be something to share with Butler County Township Association and maybe the OTA too.

Mr. Berding - Did we talk about per capita?

Mr. Goins - That wasn't pulled together.

Mr. Berding - It might be nice to have that information as to how we compare to townships the same size as us.

Mrs. Vonderhaar - We did check some of these but some of these are very rural. It wasn't a good comparison.

Mr. Berding – What is the will of the Board in analyzing this data? Are you wanting to ask specific questions tonight? Do you want to request more data? Obviously this is not an agenda where we're going to take action. I'm very interested to hear what you have to say as far as the what the data represents. Some of the numbers surprised me. Some didn't surprise me.

Mr. McAbee - Do our numbers reflect the 5% raise we just gave them?

Mr. Goins – Yes, it does.

Mr. Berding - I know both chiefs expressed concerns about people in their office that they had good personnel they didn't want to lose. I think we need to have at a future meeting an executive session to discuss individual compensation for individual employees. If we're going to make an adjustment or not. And, why?

Mrs. Hartkemeyer - When we're thinking about a total compensation strategy how do we want to weigh the components. By that the actual monetary value vs the benefits. I think it would make sense to talk about that briefly. Traditionally in government the pay might not be as great, but the benefits are better. In the private sector there is some thought that the salaries might be better, but the benefits might not be as good. I don't

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know that we can necessarily say that about Fairfield Township right now and the enrichment of the benefits. We have taken steps over the years to modify that. I think there has been a little bit of a shift in that compensation strategy. The other factor in that too is that benefits are just getting more expensive. I think we need to have some conversation about those two things.

Mr. McAbee - To me compensation means all of that, taking paid time off, the long-term longevity incentive, car allowance that we have, etc. Those numbers probably aren't in these numbers.

Mrs. Hartkemeyer - I would not want to figure out all the benefits package for all of these employees. The 5% for health insurance might want to be something we would want to look at.

Mr. McAbee - It would be nice to know what some of these other townships are doing. It's not where we want to go to talk about health insurance, but we have to. This year we're over \$1 million in what we have to pay.

Mrs. Hartkemeyer - Benefits and salaries all ties together.

Mr. McAbee - On this example of possible recommendations of possible adjusted compensation \$270,000/year does this include the extra cost of retirement based on that money.

Ms. Schultz - Workers' compensation; we pay a percentage and that changes every year. OPERS average is probably 12%. Social security is only paid by part-time workers.

Mr. Berding - I don't know if we should consider this all at once or just step into it. As far as supplying more data is there more than just discussed that you would like to see.

Mrs. Hartkemeyer - I like the data. I'm glad we didn't pay someone to do it. This is actually what I was looking for. I'm really pleased that you did this.

Mr. Berding - What is the will of the Board as far as timeline to bring this back as discussion at our next meeting. Do we want to have an executive session at our next meeting, making adjustments or if we do it or not. The data could be updated, and we could just analyze it ourselves to discuss if we're going to make adjustments.

Mrs. Hartkemeyer - I don't feel the need to discuss it further before we decide to take some action. I would like Mrs. Vonderhaar to get some rough benchmarking data on government insurance with communities that have similarities.

Mr. McAbee - I like the idea of having executive session.

Mr. Berding - Let's have this for our May 9th meeting to discuss employment, salaries, etc. We may or may not have action taken that evening.

Mr. McAbee - May be we should find out what the township taxpayers want to pay for. What services in the township are we providing or not providing.

Mrs. Hartkemeyer - If we're going to ask questions to residents we need to be ready for the answers.

Mr. Berding - Lets have that as an item for Board discussion at our next meeting. We can also discuss training for our employees.

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ADJOURNMENT

Motion made by Mr. Berding, second by Mrs. Hartkemeyer to adjourn at 7:41 PM.
All in favor.

Minutes submitted by:

Shelly Schultz, Fiscal Officer

Michael Berding, Trustee Chairperson

Shannon Hartkemeyer, Trustee Vice-Chairperson

Joe McAbee, Trustee

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