

**CHARTER TOWNSHIP OF YPSILANTI
MINUTES OF THE NOVEMBER 1, 2011 WORK SESSION**

Supervisor Brenda L. Stumbo called the meeting to order at approximately 6:00 p.m. in the Ypsilanti Township Civic Center Board Room, 7200 S. Huron River Drive, Ypsilanti Township.

Members Present: Supervisor Brenda L. Stumbo, Treasurer Larry Doe, Trustees Jean Hall Currie, Stan Eldridge, Mike Martin and Scott Martin

Members Absent: Clerk Karen Lovejoy Roe

Legal Counsel: Wm. Douglas Winters and Angela King

1. DISCUSS 2012 FISCAL YEAR BUDGET

A. 14-B DISTRICT COURT - FUND 236

Judge Charlie Pope provided revised projected revenue numbers (see attached). He said he basically took what had transpired in the last ten months, divided it by ten and multiplied it by twelve, assuming it would be about the same amount made last year.

Judge Pope gave three ways expenses had already been decreased for the court:

1. Vacant Deputy Clerk position assigned to Probation
2. Financial contribution for software had ended
3. Magistrate/Court Administrator - Kathy Collins, the Court Administrator, would retire in December 2012 and it was proposed that Mark Nelson, the part-time Magistrate take the new position

These three items would result in \$125,000 less in expenditures for the 2012 budget and he felt everything possible had been done in the way of staff reductions.

Judge Pope listed the union and non-union positions and explained that the bailiff's were on call and paid hourly, with no benefits.

Judge Pope reported that from 2006 to present, the Court saw a 30% increase in the three categories of civil cases filed. He explained the Court usually received about 5,051 civil cases per year and it had been close to 7,200 for the last few years. The irony was that 65% of the filing fees paid for each case actually went to the State of Michigan, leaving very little as local revenue. He also reported that the Court provided services for the 500 felony cases it received per year, however some cases were reduced to misdemeanors and the others were transferred to Washtenaw Circuit Court for trial, thus generating very little revenue. The criminal authorized cases, such as

**CHARTER TOWNSHIP OF YPSILANTI
NOVEMBER 1, 2011 WORK SESSION MINUTES
PAGE 2**

Domestic Violence, had remained fairly consistent at approximately 800 per year. He said the bulk of the Court's cases involved criminal traffic citations and drunk driving enforcement, but these had shown the most dramatic decrease since 2006. The highest caseload of 22,480 cases was in 1992 and of that number, 12,000 to 13,000 were traffic violations. He added they were lucky to get 3,500 traffic cases per year, currently.

Judge Pope listed some things he felt the Court could do:

- Enforce fines that had already been assessed, especially traffic violations, through Show Cause proceedings in front of the Magistrate.
- Tax Intercept - Court filed garnishment against a State Income Tax refund to collect fines and fees.
- Use grant money the District Courts in Washtenaw County were awarded from the U. S. Justice Department to allow a Probation Officer to oversee those on probation for Domestic Violence, freeing the other 14B Court Probation Officer for other tasks.
- Seek grant money through the State to hire a consultant, through the National Center for State Courts in Williamsburg, VA, to come to Washtenaw County and advise the three District Courts on how to work together.

Judge Pope said he appreciated how the Township Board had worked with 14-B Court through the years.

Trustee Eldridge asked for an explanation concerning the dramatic drop in traffic citations. He said in 1992 there were only 22 officers on the force and now were 31, so it seemed the number of citations should have increased.

Mike Radzik, OCS Director, reported that traffic enforcement was the number one topic discussed at the weekly police meetings with the Sheriff's Department Lieutenant. He did not have an answer to Trustees Eldridge's question but said they were trying to figure it out.

Treasurer Larry Doe reiterated that traffic enforcement was discussed at every police meeting and confirmed they were at a loss to explain the drop in traffic citations. The Treasurer discussed the short falls of the Court budget and felt internal cuts were still needed.

Supervisor Stumbo explained that other expenses, such as utilities and administrative fees had been added to the 14-B Court budget. She explained the Board had set the Court up as their own funding and revenue unit, like the fire and police department. She supported the Court's existence and felt it was needed locally. She stated that the Township was looking to add four deputies and suggested that one or two of them be dedicated to traffic enforcement. The Supervisor requested that new hire's contract agreements be brought before the Board.

Treasurer Doe asked if each of the 7,200 civil cases actually went to court. Judge Pope explained that most did but if a Default Judgment was entered, it could be done by mail and would not go to court.

**CHARTER TOWNSHIP OF YPSILANTI
NOVEMBER 1, 2011 WORK SESSION MINUTES
PAGE 3**

B. FIRE DEPARTMENT – FUND 206

Fire Chief Copeland explained the changes made in the revised proposed budget, totaling \$464,000 (see attached).

Supervisor Stumbo said the Chief had shown how the revised budget could preserve 15% in fund balance and get through until 2013 when the millages would be up.

Chief Copeland also provided an additional memo with the concession package for 2012 & 2013 that was presented to the firefighters, which resulted in additional savings of \$454,000.

Treasurer Doe questioned if the concession package passed what percentage of pay reduction would a retired firefighter expect to see.

Chief Copeland responded it would be a 30% pay reduction.

**2. REQUEST OF MIKE RADZIK, OCS DIRECTOR TO DISCUSS VACANT –
ABANDONED PROPERTY ORDINANCE**

Mike Radzik, OCS Director said he wanted to familiarize the Board with this ordinance at a Work Session in order to initiate discussion on it rather than bringing it to a Board Meeting for the first time. He requested that it go on the next agenda for first reading and explained that it was a proposed ordinance that required the registration and safety inspection of vacant buildings within the Township. It was designed to help prevent deterioration of neighborhood and business districts and had been successful in other jurisdictions. He explained that once a property became vacant, the owner would be required to register it in the Building Department and soon thereafter, a mandatory safety inspection would be performed to determine if it was safe, or if any blight conditions existed that needed to be addressed. The intent was to include commercial and perhaps light industrial properties in the ordinance as well. Registrations would have to be renewed each year and if it were sold or reoccupied, the Township would have to be notified. The ordinance also addressed fire-damaged properties with a time limit and would be fee driven in order to cover the inspection, clerical time and if required, board up fees. He reported that there were currently over \$50,000 worth in board up expenses sitting as uncollected, delinquent invoices. This ordinance would allow collection of those invoices as a special assessment on property taxes, the same as noxious weeds.

Supervisor Stumbo asked if any other communities were currently doing this.

Mike Radzik responded Canton Township had adopted a similar ordinance last year, and the City of Ypsilanti had something in place. The Supervisor and Mr. Radzik discussed the process in the case of a foreclosed property.

Trustee Scott Martin asked if attorney fees in these cases could be included in this ordinance.

**CHARTER TOWNSHIP OF YPSILANTI
NOVEMBER 1, 2011 WORK SESSION MINUTES
PAGE 4**

Attorney Angela King replied that the ordinance addressed the matter of awarding actual costs incurred by the township, including attorney fees.

Ron Fulton, Building Director reported the MEP program, which the Township Board authorized, had documented 200 vacant homes to date and the number continued to rise.

3. REVIEW AGENDA

Supervisor Stumbo asked the Board for permission to add Resolution No. 2011-33 to the agenda under Other Business. The Board agreed.

Supervisor Stumbo explained that a new map was being distributed with the changes for some of the lights for the S .Mansfield Special Assessment District. If it was approved, Clerk Lovejoy Roe had requested the passage be contingent upon the Washtenaw County Road Commission being on the same page as DTE concerning sufficient space for curb, storm drains and road right-of-way.

ADJOURNMENT

The meeting adjourned at approximately 7:10 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Karen Lovejoy Roe, Clerk
Charter Township of Ypsilanti