

**MINUTES OF THE
TRUTH IN TAXATION PUBLIC HEARING
PARK DISTRICT OF LA GRANGE
536 EAST AVENUE, LA GRANGE, ILLINOIS**

DECEMBER 11, 2023

President Opyd called the Public Hearing to order at 6:07 P.M.

PRESENT: Commissioners Vear, Posey, Opyd

ABSENT: Commissioners Lacey and Chvatal

STAFF PRESENT: Executive Director Jenny Bechtold
Director of Recreation Kevin Miller
Recording Secretary Linda Muth

OTHERS PRESENT: Attorney Erin Monforti
Wight & Company – Patty King, Mijung Ko
Jim Boo, Marian Honel-Wilson, Molly Price, Vickie Renick

Motion to Open Truth in Taxation Public Hearing

President Opyd asked for a motion to open the Truth in Taxation Hearing. The motion was so moved by Commissioner Posey, seconded by Commissioner Vear, and passed by Roll Call Vote as follows:

AYES: Commissioners Posey, Vear, Opyd

NAYES: None

ABSENT: Commissioners Lacey and Chvatal

Director Bechtold stated that notice of the hearing was published in the November 30, 2023 edition of the *Suburban Life* and she read the notice of the proposed tax increase for corporate and special purpose property taxes, debt service and public building commission leases, and the total property taxes to be levied for 2023. The total of \$3,552,714.00 represents 3.45% over the previous year. She explained that the reason for the increase is to capture the taxes on new growth in La Grange which otherwise would result in them receiving a permanent discount.

Public Comments

Jim Boo, 1327 Mason, La Grange, stated that he objects to Truth in Taxation. He stated that 100% of the Park District's spending is recreational and that it does not provide any essential services to the community. Taxes continue to go up and the Board should live within the 4.99% or go to referendum. He does not buy into the permanent loss of revenue. He has lived in La Grange for 20 years and if his property value goes up with the triennial reassessment, that is not new growth. The Board needs to cap their spending and explain to residents why they need to exceed the cap.

Marian Honel-Wilson, president of the Community Diversity Group stated that she believes recreation is an essential service. This was proved during the pandemic. People need to spend time with nature and recreate.

Molly Price, 909 S. Catherine, La Grange, questioned if the increase as a percentage for the Park District would result in a decrease anywhere else. She is offended that the library put in a drive-up window and they spend a lot of money all the time on building upgrades. She would like there to be a way to decrease one area to offset an increase in another. There should be an overview of government bodies with the village to assess overarching needs. President Opyd responded that the library, village, and park district are separate government entities and our budget is completely separate. He stated he was glad she was at the meeting and encouraged her to attend other entities' board meetings and view their agendas online. Commissioner Posey also stressed that we are a separate body with its own budget. She stated that the hearing tonight is to get feedback from the public on the Board's recommendation to increase the 2023 levy collected in 2024 based on new growth. There is new housing, including the townhome development, with families which can impact on our services. She compared it to upkeep of your own home; sometimes you need to put on a new roof. Molly stated that she can see that we need the increase and is okay with it.

Attorney Monforti concurred that the library, village, and park district are separate taxing entities and endorsed the suggestion that Molly attend a library meeting to voice her concerns.

Vicky Renick, 1204 S. Stone, La Grange, stated that she would like all entities that tax La Grange residents to be responsible with their dollars. She added that the parks are in terrible condition and that there was an injury while playing at Sedgwick Park. If we take this money she would like us to be good stewards and make the parks safe. There has been increase after increase with no visible improvements.

Board Comments

Commissioner Posey stated that the increase is necessary to capture the new growth which will spread the tax burden across all residents of La Grange and it is a worthwhile expenditure.

Commissioner Vear stated that we have been through the same routine in past years and it is normal to capture new growth. The Mason development was constructed three years ago and if we do not do this it is disadvantageous to existing citizens. Director Bechtold added that it is different this year because inflation is so high.

President Opyd stated that this has been discussed previously in consideration of how we impact the residents of La Grange. We try to remain consistent and capture new residents.

President Opyd asked for a motion to close the Truth in Taxation Public Hearing. The motion was so moved by Commissioner Posey, seconded by Commissioner Vear, and passed by Roll Call Vote as follows:

AYES: Commissioners Posey, Vear, Opyd


NAYES: None

ABSENT: Commissioners Lacey and Chvatal


Adjournment

At 6:21 P.M. Commissioner Vear motioned to adjourn the meeting.

Commissioner Posey seconded the motion, which passed unanimously by Voice Vote.



Brian Opyd, President



Jenny Bechtold, Board Secretary
Approved 01/22/2024