

EAST BLOOMFIELD FIRE DISTRICT
Budget Open Meeting Minutes
OCTOBER 17th 2022

The meeting was recorded for note keeping purposes with the number in attendance for accuracy.

Phil Rhoda 3 year	George Heissenberger 12/2020	Jeff Kachmaryk	Zach Legters	Ryan Duvall
2022	2023	2024	2025	2026

Called to Order: Meeting was called by Chairperson Heissenberger at 6:32 pm. Meeting was held in the Community room.

Attendance:

	Present	Absent
Chairperson George Heissenberger	X	
Commissioner Zach Legters	X	
Commissioner Phil Rhoda	X	
Commissioner Ryan Duvall	X	
Commissioner Jeff Kachmaryk	X	

Chief Pete Koppmann __X__

Secretary Heather Barbaro __X__

Also Present: Derrick Legters __X__ Steve Murnan __X__ Joann Long __X__ Seth Jonas __x__ Abbey Miller X__, Shane Clement X__, Derrick Legters X__, Nick Vanorman X__ Chris treadway X__ Geoff Breeze X__, Harry Wells X__, Linda Wells X__ - , Liz Voorhees X__ Jim Voorhees

Public Comment:

-Welcome and overview by Chairperson Heissenberger Roberts Rules of order for the meeting.

-Time limit set for each speaker due to number of guests. Time limit was 2 minutes. Once everyone has a time to speak those who needed more time can share again.

-Meeting to take 30 minutes and then regular scheduled monthly meeting will take place. Reminder to raise hands and states name to help out secretary capture everything needed.

-Liz Voorhees, resident of East Bloomfield. She supports the budget 2% potential increase. She needed to have her husband Jim use the fire department services twice this year alone and she does not want to have the zero increase limit the departments ability to respond. She added that we can buy more now with our money than we can in coming years. She didn't see a reason to push it off because there could be an increase of 4% next year, or 6 or 8. We can use

the money now and invest where we can. So again she supports the 2% increase.

-Chairperson Heissenberger asked the board if they had any questions or comments. They did not at this time.

-Joann Long- East Bloomfield tax payer for almost 30 years, as well as a department firefighter. She read from a prewritten passage as it was easier for her to share her thoughts that way. Additionally she provided the secretary these notes to enter in and add to the meeting minutes.

“My understanding is the difference between a net 0% budget increase and the allowed 2% tax levy increase is about \$5,000 of total income to the Fire District. The 2% increase would impact the average taxpayer just a few dollars. However, the funds not acquired using the proposed net 0% increase will eliminate that \$5,000 from being used for operational expenses, being placed in the Equipment Reserve, or be used for long term investing.

I, personally, do not want a repeat of the 2019 10% tax hike because previous years' commissioner's chose a similar 0% tax rate increase only to discover (despite numerous warnings) that they were facing a budget shortfall by keeping the tax rate at or near 0%. Budgeting for yearly expenses and simultaneously saving each year for large/capital expenses while having minimal tax increases is much more fiscally responsible and greatly reduces the likelihood or need for a large tax increase in the future.

Consider the impact of the anticipated 9% inflation. She then asked that all commissioners be present in the meeting as one had to step out.

Not only does the loss of income impact the short-term (i.e., operating expenses) but it will also impact long-term purchasing & investment power of the district by not having that money available (i.e., long term CD) or even simple interest earned in a savings account.”

-At this time it was two minutes and Secretary Barbaro had to let her know of the time restriction.

-Chris Treadway then shared his thoughts. Been a resident in the village for 13 years and understand municipality on certain things. Also a farmer for the town and supports the 2% increase. With being in municipality he has an idea of what's going on in that end of things. There has been increases there due to covid and he does not see why the commissioners can not allow this 2% increase to take place. He feels its unfair to the members on the front lines. He was brought to this meeting from two volunteer firefighters who came to him because they were concerned about this. That is why he was here tonight. He was here for them on the front lines. And If something happened to him or his family he wants them there. He wants fuel in the trucks, everything ready to roll. Finally, again he supports the 2% increase. Thank you.

-Chairperson Heissenberger asked the board of commissioners again if they had any comments back and there were none at this time.

-Harry Wells, resident of East Bloomfield since 1992. Thankful he has never had a fire at his residence. But he has seen the amazing work the members have done. If the 2% helps them with the inflation there is no reason there should not be the 2% increase.

-Linda Wells, corrected and said they have been residents since 1972. She wanted to add in many calls have been to her neighbors whether brush fires or chimney fires on her dead end street. She wants the 2% and thinks its needed. Even if they have to bank some of it, get it now so we do not have to increase it by 5% or 10% in the future. We need this. The people helping us need it. She was for the increase.

-Chairperson Heissenberger wanted to address the term "banking the money" as everything has to be accounted for. There are many reserves already planned for. Since it is tax money everything is accounted for.

-Derrick Legters said since Joann could not finish her thoughts with the limited time he was going to read and share more of what she planned out.
Since the cost to the taxpayer is SO minimal, and the benefit to the Fire District could be significant, it seems reasonable to reconsider the proposed budget to avoid future shortfalls as have happened in the past. Budget proposal decisions should be based on historical cost and trend analysis as well as current economic factors. In the Board of Fire Commissioners approved August minutes regarding contracts Commissioner Duvall did say "to be careful about budgets. And to plan for major price increases due to fuel costs and salt costs." Why aren't we being careful in all aspects?

This year the fire district exceeded its fuel budget within six months due to the rising cost of fuel. Considering inflationary costs for goods and services are forecast to continue for much of 2023, coupled with the need to continue saving for future purchases, a 2% tax increase is sensible and prudent. The world is indeed changing, and adapting to the short term while still planning for the long term is critical.

In summary, a net 0% budget tax increase may feel good and look good in the short-term but will be detrimental in practice and hinder the Fire District's future purchasing and investment power. The Capital Planning Committee has based its long-range planning on a nominal 1%-2% yearly tax increase. As a Bloomfield taxpayer, I support a net 2% increase to maintain the recommended projected income level and to avoid a repeat of a 2018/2019 double-digit tax escalation.

It has been stated that "we have the money and can use funds from an existing CD to artificially keep the tax rate at a 0% increase". You are now losing funds on both ends (income and investment) thereby further reducing the purchasing and investment power of the Fire District. Is this really the best use of taxpayer funds?

I would much rather have small yearly incremental tax increases then face the possibility of incurring a very large increase all at once to compensate for poor planning and ignoring historical facts and figures. The long-range budget plan shows that a nominal tax increase keeps the Fire District in a very strong financial position to react to unforeseen expenses, as well as maintaining a schedule for capital purchases (i.e. SCBA's, apparatus and building repairs & upgrades).

-Secretary Barbaro had to let Derrick know the two-minute time limit had been reached.

-Chairperson Heissenberger asked if anyone on the board wanted to share the differences on the budget from last year to this years proposed budget.

-Commissioner Legters increased a few things due to inflation since the first quarter had 8% and the second had 9%. There was an increase on electric and natural gas, fuel, among the biggest increases. They found cleaning and other items in house due to COVID were no longer required as much. So house was able to decrease a little bit. Maintenance has stayed roughly the same, even with inflation. Based on paying ahead on many of our contracts like our generator maintenance. We were able to save with a few long term contracts. The Internet and telephone have not increased so that stayed the same. Gear allotment changed with an increase due to rising costs. He was happy to address specific questions and guests present were provided access to copies of the proposed budget.

-Liz Vorhees wanted to ask a little more about the truck gas and how it was budgeted last year but that was all used up in 6 months.

-Commissioner Legters let her know they budgeted and it was in line with the previous year. But due to the drastic increase in fuel the most current fuel expense at end of September was \$5,400.00. So in the next month the district will have doubled what was originally budgeted for fuel for trucks originally.

-Liz Vorhees was confused on why there would potentially be a zero percent increase when the budget for gas was doubled.

-Chairperson Heissenberger explained with a zero percent increase that doesn't mean line items in general do not change or increase. It just means it does not potentially affect the taxpayer from last year to this upcoming year. Every line in the budget may have been changed in order to accomplish this. Fuel budget for next year will be \$7,000. Since house costs have gone down the money has been able to be shifted elsewhere.

-Linda Wells -Confirmed the 0 percent increase. And wanted to know where the funds were coming from to keep it as such since nothing can really be carried over from this year.

-Commissioner Legters confirmed due to many of the long term maintenance contracts entered in before the budget was able to be saved some with the rise of inflation.

-Linda Wells followed up with asking if the main account modified was the house line item.

-Joann Long also wanted to know about the equipment reserves and long term spending accounts. These keep us solvent for future years for equipment and SCBA. Or even building requires and this possible \$5000 from the tax increase

would then not be added to any of the line items. Correct? We are reducing our budget by \$5000. Between the Net 0 and Net 2%.

-Commissioner Legters confirmed yes, it is roughly \$5000.

-Joann Long confirmed that money then could have been put into equipment reserves, long term accounts, and operation accounts would not then get a chance to be saved. As this would normally be put in there. Especially with inflation being 9% it is something to think about.

-Chairperson Heissenberger asked everyone to look at the equipment reserve line. Explained trucks turned over every 20 years or so replaced, number does vary every year to go to equipment reserve. In previous years it was higher, but they were able to see a big drop recently in this line item.

-Chris Treadway asked what happens when we need to replace one of the trucks with a brand-new truck. You will have to use the money in reserves. The trucks are worth much more than what is in there and budgeted. Again, the board is to him personally trying to cut money and taking it away from the firefighters. He then asked if anyone on the commissioner board could even answer how much a brand-new firetruck would even cost. You could need to replace one tomorrow you are down and need to make that purchase, engine blew and do you have enough money then in reserves to purchase a new one.

-Commissioner Legters went over how we financed our last truck, and its become more of a practical standard to use this method.

-Chris added in he understands you can't bank the money but why not take what the district would get with the 2% increase and put it in the reserve for these trucks. For him it would be a no brainer. He works for the village of Bloomfield and has even witnessed the ambulance pull up at one point and stall. Because it could not make it up the road. He has seen issues and it distraught me when the guys on the front line are off to an emergency to save someone and they can't get there due to improper equipment. So why can't we have the 2% increase. You will be the only place claiming zero to raise costs when the rest of the municipality will have increased it.

-Commissioner Legters let everyone know that the emergency squad is owned by Canandaigua Emergency squad so there is no direct say over those trucks. But he understands where he is coming from. As a reference the district does receive per the contract \$14,400 a year for them using a truck bay.

-Linda Wells wanted to say she agrees with Chris and thinks it makes sense to increase and to help the members. Why would you try to set this precedent now of not increasing it with such high inflation.

-Joann had a question on who on file voted for the net 0 increase. Commissioner Rhoda said he was the one to set it in motion. Joann wanted to know who was the one who seconded the motion and was referred back to past meeting minutes.

-Chairperson Heissenberger reminded the room it was not to get personal and stick to the issues.

-Commissioner Rhoda shared originally, he came to the board with an idea of a 5% cut.

-Joann asked a follow up question on why the board is not taking the allotted 2% allowed.

-Commissioner Rhoda said he did not have to explain why to the community but there is \$100,000 in a CD that could certainly be used if there is a short fall. That was one of the reasons.

-Commissioner Duvall shared that there is actually \$200,000 in CD's.

- Joann said, It has been stated that "we have the money and can use funds from an existing CD to artificially keep the tax rate at a 0% increase". You are now losing funds on both ends (income and investment) thereby further reducing the purchasing and investment power of the Fire District. Is this really the best use of taxpayer funds?

-Commissioner Rhoda thinks it is as with the cost of everything the taxpayer needs a break.

-Chris Treadway wanted to confirm that the commissioners are not really on the front lines, they are not the ones even getting on the trucks.

-Secretary Barbaro let the room know that wasn't necessarily true. Chairperson Heissenberger let the community know he was a department life member. And well as the secretary being a member though she is not on the board.

-Chris said the board are the 5 people making decisions and one of them wanted to make a 5% cut? To him that is insane and it is his opinion. With the time and the shootings going on the firefighters are just as important as cops as he is concerned and in the village they had to make adjustments. Due to this threat, and you are all going to cut money to these guys. To hear this is upsetting to him.

-Commissioner Rhoda addressed the comment of not protecting the firemen and referenced confirming with the chief that the board is protecting its

members. There were purchases made of Kevlar vests expensed. So there is protection and he sees it differently. Losing 2% doesn't protect them any less.

-Derrick Legters: Wanted to add little comment of how if the 2% increase went up his taxes would only go up \$6. And if you spread this out over the whole district that's minimal even spreads out over 2,400 homes. When in the future it will increase maybe. The fuel budget alone should make them want to increase. Everyone is increasing their budgets. The school budget is going up as well.

-Chairperson Heissenberger let the room know there were 2 minutes left on this session for the meeting.

-Linda Wells- Wanted to know why the tax payers do not get a chance to make this overall decision. She wanted to know why they commissioners have the power to even do this.

-Commissioner Rhoda mentioned the board was set up following state guidelines.

-Though this is not the way it is done here Linda strongly believes it should be given to the people in town as taxpayers to decide.

-Chairperson Heissenberger thanked everyone for their thoughts and the board would take everything under advisement. Rules are not set up by the board they are set up from the state as far as operations. There is due diligence on all of the decisions made.

-Thank you everyone for coming and you are all welcome to stay for the regular meeting.

Meeting end time: 6:30 PM October 17th.

I, Heather Barbaro, secretary of the East Bloomfield Fire District, hereby certify that the attached minutes are true and accurate copies of minutes maintained by me in the ordinary course of business and as part of my role as secretary of the fire district.

Secretary