

**Village of Fox Lake  
Finance Committee Meeting  
February 26, 2008  
6:00 p.m.**

**I. Call to Order**

The Meeting was called to order at 6:00 p.m.

**II. Roll Call**

Present were Chairman Ulasz, Trustee Working, Trustee Murrey, Trustee Kiesgen and Trustee Koske. Also in attendance were Mayor Irwin and Treasurer Paul Christensen. Trustee Bender was absent.

**III. Approval of Prior Meeting Minutes**

Chairman Ulasz asked if there were any questions or clarifications to the minutes of February 12, 2008. There were no comments, the minutes will stand as presented.

**IV. Bills to be paid**

Chairman Ulasz asked if there were any questions regarding the bills to be paid in the amount of \$426,734.81. Chairman Ulasz stated there were no questions or comments, the bill list will stand as presented.

**V. Ratification of Manual Check List**

Chairman Ulasz asked if there were any questions. Paul Christensen stated inadvertently the manual check list was not placed in the mailboxes until Monday this week. We apologize for the delay in receiving the list; if you need additional time to review we can postpone the approval until the next meeting. Trustee Murrey stated he had not received the list, Paul stated it is probably in your mailbox; Mayor Irwin gave him her listing. He reviewed and stated he did not have any concerns.

There were no additional questions or comments, the manual checklist will stand as presented.

**VI. Grainger Bills**

Chairman Ulasz asked if there were any questions on the Grainger bills in the amount of \$2,667.70, there were no questions or comments and will stand as presented. I will make a motion at the Board Meeting for approval.

**VII. Old Business - None**

**VIII. New Business**

Discussion on 2008/2009 Budget and Telecommunication Tax

Chairman Ulasz stated she was going to ask Paul Christensen to join me in this conversation. Chairman Ulasz stated in each of your mailboxes was your budget projections for 2008 and 2009. What I am suggesting is what I suggested last September; again it is to review the telecommunication tax and has everyone had a chance to review the budget summary with and without the tax calculated into the amount. Trustee Murrey stated he has not had an opportunity to review it can you please provide the Cliff notes. Chairman Ulasz stated I would have Paul review this briefly.

Paul Christensen stated we set this up so this does not go through quickly, we ran the projections, and I want to make it clear this is real rough projections, no Department Head has reviewed these, I have used the historical data and put in the average raises and average inflationary items. The budget numbers can come back somewhat different but for the most part they are fairly accurate, and again Department Heads haven't had any input, we may be able to drive it down lower with where they can save money, at the same time it could go up due to rising costs in gas etc. Essentially what I see as of right now is we will have a deficit of \$250,000 next year. We are certainly going to work to drive that down for cost savings, but that is a pretty large number to decrease so one of the things we thought was to go and increase the tax for the Telecommunication; if we did that that would alleviate the deficit down to \$50,000 which is a much more manageable number. I think there would be a good likable that we could get that number as a positive and then start building up our fund balance and turn the corner.

Chairman Ulasz stated we again are projecting our budget for 2007-2008; everyone has worked very hard at keeping costs down and staying within the budget. Chairman Ulasz stated this is a very unpopular thing and it is sad that we have to present this type of additional tax. I want to tell you what this means to the average citizen within the boundaries of Fox Lake. If you have a \$100.00 telephone bill it would increase your telephone bill by \$2.25 a month, the whole year \$28.00. This could bring into the Village approximately \$160 -165 thousand dollars. It is an unpopular position, but it a position we need to bring up and review with the Trustees. Paul Christensen stated we purposely did not put it on the agenda for this evening so everyone had an opportunity to review it and make a decision. Paul stated if we do want to do this there is a March deadline so we would have to pass the Ordinance at the next meeting or we would have to wait another six months. If we pass it in March, we would see funds in July. Chairman Ulasz stated the nice thing about the telecommunications tax is you can take the tax down or reverse it when it is not needed.

Trustee Murrey stated I have asked a few times and I am asking again especially with going into next years budget we have tossed around a few ideas to increase revenue without having to go back to the taxpayer. Are we going to have a floor plan or building block as to where we are looking to go to increase the tax? I know we have Jimmy out there to finally rattle the cages to bring people into Fox Lake. I would feel a lot more comfortable with this tax if we could tell people there is a light of the things we anticipate to accomplish. I know we have fought hard to keep Ray Scarpelli here and all we hear is we gave the metra parking away. I don't think they understand the reasoning and that is just not in Fox Lake it is everywhere right now. We want to be sure we don't lose a large commercial tax base; I would like the Finance Department to provide what we are looking at in the next 24 months. Paul Christensen stated now with a Village Administrator I feel we can provide additional information and additional ideas to the Village Board. Mayor Irwin stated we have had discussions with Exceed and I am sure Nancy Schuerr will be having each of you in to bring you up to date as to what they would like to do with the property.

Chairman Ulasz stated last year we provided a list of possible revenue sources and we will update that for you and get it distributed. Many of the Villages are having the same problems. Paul stated with the hotel moving forward they are other possibilities that we will be addressing as well.

Trustee Working stated I want to go on record stating I am adamantly against this. We are always putting it back on the taxpayers because we can't make some tough decisions up here on the Board. I have had to make some tough decisions for the Building Department, I have not hired a full-time inspector, and I have a secretary I haven't hired to try and cut costs and try

to keep the budget down. And now we are hiring an Administrative people and throwing taxes on the citizens. I am adamantly against this and unfortunately I will not be here on the 11<sup>th</sup> of March because I will be out of the country on a planned vacation. I am adamantly against this, the taxpayers always have to open their checkbook, and I don't see it.

Chairman Ulasz stated that this administration has not added any taxes and I want to make sure everyone realized that. Secondly, I really welcome all the Trustees to attend the budget meetings. The budgets are available at the Library or Village Hall if anyone would like to review the current budgets. I am open to suggestions.

Trustee Working stated some of the items I do agree with, we have been subsidizing the trash removal. We have reduced that down. If you lived in another municipality you would be paying full price. I agree with that because it is a service we are not providing but what waste management is providing. But this again I am adamantly against it and that is all I have to say on the subject.

Trustee Koske asked if the budget meetings are posted so we can attend? Chairman Ulasz stated they are posted and are open to the public. Trustee Koske asked if we have taken a look at some of our loans to see if they can be consolidated or re-financed to save additional monies? Paul stated we have looked at that as you know we just did the water one recently, but I am always open to new ideas. Paul said at this point we are at a hard ball issues, either raise revenue or reduce expenses. Trustee Koske asked if the Board would vote against this tax what options are you looking at to lower the expense. What services are you looking to cut, and I think we need to have an idea of that so we can make an intelligent vote. I don't want to see a increase tax, but are 10 people going to lose their job? Paul stated I can quantify the number of people but as a Finance person I can't state what service is better than another service. It is roughly \$50,000 per person, or three people. Chairman Ulasz said we are out of the reserve and it is a tough decision no matter what.

**IX. Committee Comments**

Chairman Ulasz stated she would like to make one comment; last time I talked about the bill list. Carol Ward has come back with what some of the other municipalities are doing on their bill list. So what we have decided to do with the bill list is upon approval there will be a bill list made available at the Board meeting for anyone to review. Once the bill list is approved it is there for the citizens to come in and look at it, or if you want a copy of the invoice you just need to let us know and the cost is .25 cents per page. It is readily available

**X. Audience Comments**

None

**XI. Adjournment**

There being no other business to discuss the Committee Meeting was adjourned at 6:25 p.m.

Carol Ward  
Deputy Clerk