AGENDA

I. CALL TO ORDER / DECLARATION OF QUORUM
With a quorum present, Madam Chair Holmes called the meeting to order at 6:09 p.m.

II. APPROVAL OF MEETING MINUTES OF NOVEMBER 4, 2013
Alderman Grover moved approval. Alderman Tendam seconded. A voice vote was taken to approve the November 4, 2013 minutes and it was approved 6-0.

Citizen Comments
Ms. Maggie Weiss expressed her immediate concern of the relocation of City staff out of the Noyes Cultural Arts Center. The Noyes Tenants Association would like to find a compromise that would greatly reduce the City of Evanston footprint while still maintaining a presence in the Noyes Building. Tenants agree that having a Cultural Arts person present provides a vital point of contact for the visiting public, provides safe-guarding of the displayed art, facilitates coordination of building activities and attend to the maintenance issues. She stated they need City staff in the building.

III. ITEMS FOR DISCUSSION
None

IV. ITEMS FOR CONSIDERATION
HH1  2014 Proposed Meeting Dates Memo
Alderman Grover moved approval. Alderman Braithwaite seconded. A voice vote was taken to accept the 2014 Proposed Meeting Dates and approved 6-0.

V. TOWNSHIP OF EVANSTON
HHT2  Assessor Bonnie Wilson’s Report
Assessor Bonnie Wilson stated that in November her office helped nine tax payers receive corrections from property tax bills from missed exemptions totally $15,655. This brought the total
dollar amount to 120 tax payers since April 1, 2013 to $180,985. Corrections can still be made as far back as 2009. If citizens think they have missed an exemption they can contact the Assessor’s office to find assistance.

Assessor Wilson made the announcement that any owner receiving property tax exemptions on a property that is not their principal residents has until December 31, 2013 to contact the county assessor to calculate the amount to repay for the exemptions received erroneously. After January 1, 2014 a new state law takes effect that allows the county assessor the ability to recoup those taxes plus penalties and interest. Failure to comply with the county assessor will result in a lien being placed on the property by the county. Please contact her office for information on how to stop receiving exemptions on non-owner occupied properties. Check the exemptions by going to the Cook County Assessor’s website, cookcountyassessor.com

Alderman Tendam asked Assessor Wilson how citizens would know about this new law prior to incurring penalties besides from her announcement tonight.

Assessor Wilson replied that they wouldn’t and that is why she is trying to get the word out there.

HHT3 Township Monthly Bills

Alderman Grover moved approval. Alderman Braithwaite seconded.

Alderman Braithwaite asked if some of the bills such as the copier and consultant fees were one-time expenses that they would not see again in future bills.

Supervisor Bobkiewicz indicated there is a long-term contract with the copier and it is cost prohibited to get out of contract. He also specified that the consultant fees would end on December 31, 2013 and the water deliveries will end as well. Some of the costs are still related to the Main and Dodge tenancy which is also contracted and would not be worth the buy out to end the contract.

A voice vote was taken to approve the Township monthly bills and it was approved 6-0.

HHT4 FY14 Town of Evanston Budget

Citizen Comments

Ms. Betty Ester expressed her frustration with the new memo of the Township budget being put out only moments before the meeting. She felt that the people deserve better as she has no time to review the document prior to the meeting starting.

Based on some questions raised by Alderman Holmes in the Town Board meeting adjustments have been made. The adjustment was made for the Supervisor salary to reflect the entire 2014 year which had been pointed out by a public speaker. It is proposed to change the General Assistance Fund to provide for 200 clients which is a substantial increase from what has been seen before. The client personal expense was determined by 200 clients x $300 x 12 months which brought the budget line to $720,000. This most accurately reflects what is expected for the next year. The client rent expense has increased as well to $288,000. The client rent expense was determined by the fact that about 60% of the GA clients receive rent expense and 60% of the maximum dollar amount. Those two dollar amounts are different than what has been seen previously but are necessary. There is a significant amount of money being transferred from the Fund Balance but will still leave an ending Fund Balance of $312,074.
A couple of issues were raised by Alderman Holmes earlier in the day with Supervisor Bobkiewicz which he also addressed. The Community Purchase Services is budgeted at $164,950 and this is a line item that is shared with the City budget. The combined number would fulfill the recommendations to the agencies the Mental Health Board would recommend. Peer Services line item has not gone away but has been budgeted in a different line item and is similar to what it has been for the past couple of years.

Finally the Community Action Program has been funded by the Township for last several years. There is $27,500 allocated for the Senior Handy-Man Program, $5,000 for Investment Market and $715 for Veterans Services which has primarily been used for Memorial Day flags.

Those are the major issues with this budget. The main priority has been to ensure that the Client Services has been budgeted at an appropriate level. The Client Personal Expenses is proposed to double because of the number of people that have been walking through the doors looking for services.

Alderman Grover indicated that there has always been a significant fund balance kept. She stated that she believes that keeping 20% of expenses in the fund balance seems appropriate. Is that enough of a cushion?

Supervisor Bobkiewicz believes that this fully funds comfortably but is cautious of what will be needed in 2015.

Alderman Grover asked if the Township is staffed appropriately to serve 200 clients.

Supervisor Bobkiewicz replied that we are not staffed appropriately. A second individual is looking to be hired as quickly as possible to help and there are temporary adjustments being made to ease Mr. Henry Colquitt’s workload. When there is a second person on board they can focus on the clients and not administrative duties.

Alderman Braithwaite asked Mr. Colquitt to get an idea of the number of hours he spends per client as the 200 clients still seems too low. As he has done the math at this point there will be one case worker per 100 clients which he is concerned about.

Mr. Colquitt responded that with the average client the hours are quite minimal but there aren’t many average clients. There are currently 181 active clients and that is general assistance alone. The emergency assistance has approved 29 people. He would project needing another staff member to service 200 clients. He referred to the report by Novak that benchmarked Evanston Township to Oak Park and indicated that 66 clients are high for one person.

Alderman Grover asked about the quality of service provided which impacts Mr. Colquitt’s time spent.

Mr. Colquitt said that it takes time to deal with the multiple issues people have. He has to deal with crisis intervention first but then schedule to see them again when he isn’t working on all the other things involved. He stated that a lot of times it is unpredictable and the homeless population is another monster in itself. He specified that there is always a compliance issue for both programs and he has to first determine if they are eligible and if not, he determines where they can be sent and what resources are available. When people come in with emergency assistance requests then they take precedent and the general assistance have to be put to the side.

Alderman Braithwaite asked on average how many clients Mr. Colquitt sees a week.

Approved 2.3.14
Mr. Colquitt answered that the clients have access to him whenever he is needed. It can be from 25 to 60 depending on the need at one time. On benefit day he tries to kill two birds with one stone by speaking to people has they pick up their benefits.

Alderman Holmes asked about the community services and in the way in which things were listed, she is seeing them differently. She knows the agencies that have gotten funded in the past and is concerned about the ones that Township clients would get services. She wants to make sure that when we are allocating this money now to the Mental Health Board to sure that services won't be diminished.

Mr. Colquitt indicated the funding that we give to the Mental Health Board and the minimal use that we have given clients to use their services. He has a list of services that a health agency offers. It is a lot to look at with direct service.

Alderman Holmes requested a listing of agencies that are going to benefit and that will help the Township clients. She is not comfortable with a blind figure rather than looking at how it is distributed and to whom.

Supervisor Bobkiewicz specified that there are a number of ways approach this. One way would be to have the entire peer services funding come from the Township. The list of agencies listed in the packet at least half of them work with the Township. We could either allocate dollars to be a proportional share with these organizations and sit down to meet with each of these agencies. They could come back with a line item with a list of agencies and the number provided to each.

Alderman Braithwaite looking at the agencies that have an impact on that population, is there a way to get a head around some numbers?

Supervisor Bobkiewicz responded certainly. There could be some work done with the Mental Health Board with how they are allocating and who they are allocating to. They have not sat down and had a programmatic conversation with the Township. We could settle on a dollar amount and by April and May have a clear understanding of where the money is going.

Alderman Grover suggested that they look at the agencies applications from this year and we could probably get a lot of that data. We would find that most of the agencies serve the family members that are Township clients. There has to be a better way to support funding through the Mental Health Board. The more that we can align the Mental Health Board’s mission with the Township budget it would be helpful.

Alderman Burris expressed that she does see the benefit of a consolidated approach. How do we qualify a homeless person to determine if they are eligible?

Mr. Colquitt replied that the code states they must have an address and have the intention of staying in Evanston. Connections for the Homeless allows clients to use their mailing address. Mr. Colquitt has to confirm how many services they are getting from that agency to make sure they are inept. They have to be contacted and it is their responsibility to check their mail at Connections for the Homeless. Funds are not given to someone that is leasing an apartment and has someone living in a room. They have to own the property.

Alderman Holmes asked if we have a list where landlords have rooms for Township individuals.

Mr. Colquitt indicated that list is now non-existent. The homeless tap into resources that they run into on the streets and what they hear about through word of mouth.
Citizen Comment

Ms. Betty Ester asked how the appropriation from the ordinance and the budget connected. The new budget would change the appropriation. Would that suggest that the tax levy would need to be increased?

Alderman Holmes stated that the money will be taken from the Fund Balance and not the tax levy.

Supervisor Bobkiewicz reiterated Alderman Holmes statement and said the levy would remain the same.

Supervisor Bobkiewicz offered two concrete suggestions about the allocations to the agencies that serve the clients based off of Alderman Holmes continued concern. The first would be to take the dollars and allocate them on a percentage basis to all of the agencies that the Mental Health Board is already serving. The second option would be to take the entire amount from peer services and have that broken out to agencies. The question for the committee is if they are most concern about peer services or concerned that there is a connection from the allocation then prorate it. Those are the two recommendations.

Alderman Grover is concerned that the Mental Health Board allocations are pretty specific and she is not sure the percentage prorated makes sense.

Supervisor Bobkiewicz provided an example for the Moraine Center at $40,000. What we could do is say that they would receive $35,000 from City of Evanston and $5,000 from the Township. They still get the $40,000 as requested through the Mental Health Board. Supervisor Bobkiewicz's recommendation would be to prorate it for all the agencies so they all get a portion of the Township dollars.

Alderman Holmes wants to see the breakdown of allocation per agency and is not comfortable looking at one lump sum without understanding who is getting what money. It makes it much clearer with where the Township dollars are being allocated.

Supervisor Bobkiewicz suggested the appropriate motion would be to forward this on to the Town Board with the amended budget that was presented this evening along with Alderman Holmes' request.

Alderman Grover moved for that motion. Alderman Tendam seconded.

A voice vote was taken to approve the Township Budget with the recommended amendments and it was approved 6-0.

VI. COMMUNICATION

None

VII. ADJOURNMENT

It was moved and seconded for adjournment at 7:10 p.m.

Respectfully Submitted,

Melissa Parker
Administrative Secretary