

MEMBERS PRESENT: CRAWFORD, WELLS, BUECHLER, BRUCKNER, BRADLEY AND ARMBRUSTER
MEMBERS ABSENT: KISH (LATE ARRIVAL)
ALSO PRESENT: FIRE DEPARTMENT - TRAVIS WOOLMAN, JOE STOLTZ, ADAM MARSH, NICK PREVOST
STEVE JONES, ASSESSOR
DEPARTMENT OF PUBLIC WORKS - GREG RANDALL, SUPERINTENDENT,
JEFF PARENT, ASSISTANT SUPERINTENDENT; AND
TODD THIBODEAU, RYAN RADIGAN, TYLER PETERS,
BILLY AINSWORTH, DYLAN WALTERS, JORDAN KERR
ROB MONTGOMERY, ZONING BOARD OF APPEALS / PARKS COMMISSION
CONNIE NEESE, PARKS COMMISSION

APPROVAL OF AGENDA:

Motion by Crawford, seconded by Bradley, to approve the Agenda, with the correction to NEW BUSINESS, Item 1. c): adding "from \$18.59 to \$19.12 for Lieutenant and from \$18.50 to \$20.12 for Captain. Vote, Unanimous.

CITIZENS WISHING TO ADDRESS THE BOARD: *

Travis Woolman regarding correction to 1. c), on-call pay: \$17.00 should be \$17.50.

Rob Montgomery regarding New Business, Item 1. a), proposed administrative employee 15% wage increase on base pay for hourly wage. Feels the need for a wage study rather than an across the board increase.

Angela Defrain, resident and taxpayer. She hasn't gotten a pay increases above 3% at any business she's ever worked.

NEW BUSINESS:

1. 2024 BUDGET WORK SESSION DISCUSSION:

POINTS OF DISCUSSION: DPW - Utility Receiving Budget
Assessing Department Budget
Fire Department Budget
Clerk's Department Budget and Elections Budget
Treasurer's Department

Supervisor Crawford spoke regarding the reasoning for his request for a 15% increase for administrative employees, noting that they are essential and important to day-to-day operations.

Trustee Armbruster asked about research with regard to comparable positions within surrounding cities and townships. Would like to form a sub-committee to review this further before taking action.

Treasurer Wells noted that Fort Gratiot Township is the 2nd largest municipality in St. Clair County. The administrative staff is technical and you cannot come in, off the street, and come up to speed in the jobs that these people are doing. He recently came from the private sector and stated that it's hard to get quality people and turnover is costly. He also noted that most municipalities aren't comparable to Fort Gratiot. Some are only open 3-4 days a week.

Trustee Bruckner clarified that the wage adjustment is to bring employees to a comparable wage and would not also include a cost of living increase.

Trustee Armbruster stated each job has skills that need to be developed and learned and trained upon. He agrees that employees should be compensated well, but would like to have more information before action.

NEW BUSINESS, CONTINUED:

Clerk Buechler stated St. Clair County just put out their 2024 wage structure, but he has yet to review it. He agreed that the matter should be reviewed deeper. He agreed with all comments made. He also noted that, due to divisiveness over elections, many municipalities are losing Clerks and their department staff. He agreed with all comments made, and also stated that it is tough to find and keep good employees.

Trustee Bradley stated his experience that you can spend all that money training and have that revolving door. He agreed that you have to take care of your people or you lose them.

Supervisor Crawford stated the increase would amount to about \$ 51,717.00 over five (5) Departments: Assessing Dept., Water/Sewer Dept., Treasurer's Dept., Clerk's Dept. and the General Fund.

Treasurer Wells stated that maybe, the percentage as it's proposed, seems shocking to hear, but if you look at the amounts it amounts to \$2.75 - \$3.50 based on the individuals and he doesn't find that quite as shocking as 15% right of the get go.

A brief discussion was held regarding St. Clair County's 2024 wage structure.

Trustee Bruckner noted that some of the employees have been with the Township longer than others. She asked what the turnover rate has been with employees. Supervisor Crawford stated the Township has had some turnovers in the last year.

Trustee Armbruster agreed to study this issue and comp's with Clerk Buechler before the next meeting.

- a) **NO ACTION TAKEN** on request to adjust the administrative Fort Gratiot employees 2024 wages by 15%, on the base hourly wage.
- b) **NO ACTION TAKEN** on request to freeze the administrative employee stipend pay at present 2023 levels for 2024.
- c) Motion by Crawford, seconded by Wells, to adjust the Paid-on Call Firefighter shift and call pay: Shift pay from \$17.50 to \$18.12 and on-call pay from \$17.50 to \$18.12 for firefighters; and from \$18.50 to \$19.12 for Lieutenant and from \$18.50 to \$20.12 for Captain. Roll Call Vote, 7/0. **MOTION PASSED.**

Further discussion regarding individual roles and local comparisons. Another Special Meeting will be held at 6:00 p.m. on December 20th, 2023 prior to the Regular Board Meeting.

Motion by Bradley, seconded by Kish, to adjourn. Time, 6:51 o'clock p.m. Vote, Unanimous. **MOTION PASSED.**
SPECIAL MEETING ADJOURNED.


ROBERT D. BUECHLER, CLERK
FORT GRATIOT CHARTER TOWNSHIP

RDB/RCC/vo

ROBERT C. CRAWFORD, SUPERVISOR
FORT GRATIOT CHARTER TOWNSHIP

The Charter Township of Fort Gratiot complies with the "Americans with Disabilities Act" and if auxiliary aids or services are required at the meeting for individuals with disabilities, please contact Clerk, Robert C. Crawford, 3720 Keewahdin Road, Fort Gratiot MI 48059, (810)385.4489, three days prior to said meeting.