BALDWIN TOWNSHIP SPECIAL MEETING

June 19, 2018

Present – Supervisors Brad Schumacher, Jay Swanson and Larry Handshoe. Supervisor Bryan Lawrence arrived at 7:05 p.m. Supervisor Tom Rush is absent.

Call to Order – The Baldwin Township special meeting of June 19, 2018 was called to order by Chairman Schumacher at 7:01 p.m.

Pledge of Allegiance – All present recited the Pledge of Allegiance.

Discuss Fire Relief Retirement - Present along with the Town Board were Andy Walker, Relief Association President, Scott Case, Fire Chief, Jim Oliver, Relief Association Treasurer and Amy Collins, PERA representative.

Ms. Collins was present to answer questions regarding the Statewide Volunteer Firefighter Retirement Plan. The plan was created in 2009 and is specifically designed for volunteer firefighters who provide service to a municipal fire department or an independent nonprofit firefighting corporation. It is voluntary and open to fire departments as a replacement of their volunteer firefighter retirement plan.

The Plan provides for lump-sum benefits payable to retiring volunteer firefighters. This benefit is based on years of credited service earned by the firefighter and the benefit level chosen by the volunteer fire department's sponsor. Benefit levels range from $500 to $7,500 in $100 increments for each full year of good-time service credit for firefighters who have 20 or more years of service. Prorated benefits are paid to retiring firefighters with between five and 20 years of service. To be eligible for a benefit, a firefighter must be at least 50 years old, be vested which requires a minimum of 5 years of service credit, and has severed their employment relationship with the fire department.

Each participating department in the plan will have a separate account in which the assets necessary to fund the benefits are maintained. The State Board of Investment is responsible for the investment of these assets. Funding for the plan is through the current Fire State Aid that is issued. If state funding is not sufficient to cover the cost of the benefits chosen, additional contributions will be required.

The decision to participate is made jointly by the entity operating a fire department and the volunteer firefighter relief association. Those who wish to participate contact PERA for a cost analysis for the benefit level requested. The governing body must then approve coverage and PERA will being administering the plan the following January.

The advantages are that the fire department is relieved of its annual reporting and auditing requirements, it transfers the plan administration to PERA, the Statewide Plan offers comparable or higher benefits to the firefighters at the same cost, and benefits are portable between all plans covered by the Statewide Firefighter Retirement Plan.

Walker said that the Baldwin Township Fire Relief Association members have discussed the details of switching to the Statewide Volunteer Firefighter Retirement Plan, and at their last meeting tabled the matter in order to get feedback from the Baldwin Township Supervisors since the two entities must be in agreement. It is also noted that the firefighters are in total agreement to the plan.

There was discussion regarding a concern whether Wells Fargo would charge a penalty for pulling out of their plan, and the procedure, if approved, on how to transfer the funds. Since it takes approximately 120 days to generate a cost analysis, Ms. Collins suggested that a decision be made by the 31st of October to ensure a smooth transition for the first of the year. Even though PERA would generate the reports and statements, the Town Board said that they would like to see quarterly or annual reports.

It was decided to put this item on the July 16, 2018 agenda of the regular meeting of Baldwin Township. It was highly suggested to have the penalty, if any, information before that date as well as reach out to the Township attorney in regards to any transition issues.

Adjourn – Swanson / Handshoe unanimous to adjourn at 7:55 p.m.

Submitted By: (s/) Cheryl Goetz
Deputy Clerk
Baldwin Township

Approved By: (s/) Brad Schumacher
Chairman, Board of Supervisors
Baldwin Township

7-16-18
Date

Attendees: Jim Oliver, Scott Case, Andy Walker, Amy Collins