



Rochester Hills Minutes - Draft

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Police and Road Funding Technical Review Committee

*Don Cline, Jr., John Dalton, Dale Hetrick,
Tim Jacobson, Walter Johnson, Nancy Soisson*
Council Members: *Greg Hooper, Michael Webber*
Youth Member: *Ishan Patel*

Thursday, February 4, 2010

6:00 PM

1000 Rochester Hills Drive

CALL TO ORDER

The meeting was called to order by Michael Webber at 6:00 p.m.

ROLL CALL

Present 7 - John Dalton, Greg Hooper, Don Cline, Walter Johnson, Nancy Soisson,
Michael Webber and Ishan Patel

Absent 2 - Tim Jacobson and Dale Hetrick

Others Present:

Others in Attendance:

Ted Zellers

INTRODUCTIONS

PUBLIC COMMENTS

None.

DISCUSSION ITEM

2010-0063 Police and Road Funding Discussion

Attachments: [Preliminary Millage Forecast #2.pdf](#)
[Spreadsheet Sorted by CC Ranking.pdf](#)
[Spreadsheet Sorted by Area.pdf](#)
[Spreadsheet Sorted by Timing.pdf](#)
[Spreadsheet Sorted by No Action Needed.pdf](#)
[Purpose and Charge.pdf](#)
[Mayor's memo w attachments.pdf](#)

The meeting was called to order by Michael Webber at 6:00 p.m. and a meeting agenda prepared by Mr. Webber was distributed to the attendees (attached).

Introductions were completed and Mr. Webber explained that there is a vacancy on the committee but that City Council will have a nomination process at its Monday, February 8, 2010 wherein the vacancy will be filled. He stated his expectation of having a full committee by the next committee meeting.

Mr. Hooper stated that he had some proposed ballot language regarding funding of maintenance, repair, rehabilitation and reconstruction of local roads. He stated that it is his intent to get feedback from the committee before bringing the proposed ballot language before City Council. He said the Special Assessment District Policy (SAD Policy) would also be coming before City Council for discussion and that it would be more appropriate to have the committee review the SAD Policy first.

Mr. Webber added that as the committee reviews the spreadsheets attached to the meeting agenda, the committee would remember the 22 recommendations that had been submitted in spring 2009 to make a determination as to which recommendations the committee would continue working on. He asked if any of the committee members had any additional recommendations to the list.

Mr. Johnson stated his desire to review the SAD Policy and possibly combine it with the Tax Increment Financing (TIF) and research usage of that combination as an alternative to the usage of the millage extension.

Mr. Hooper stated that Mr. Dalton's suggestion could be added to the SAD Policy discussion.

Mr. Webber commented that because of its high rating, he would like Mr. Roger Rousse to give a presentation to City Council about the SAD Policy.

Discussion ensued by the committee members regarding the advantages of having funding readily available for local road maintenance rather than reliance upon the annual millage.

Mr. Webber stated that Mr. Keith Sawdon, the City's Finance Director, had attended several of the committee's meetings and had prepared the spreadsheets to forecast what is to come if there are no changes to the millages.

Mr. Hooper clarified that the spreadsheets are a start forecast, reflecting the entire nation's economy and this is to enable the committee in being proactive in its financial planning for the future.

Mr. Johnson asked about the total taxable rate for the City.

Mr. Hooper responded that the spreadsheets do not reflect dollar amounts but rather the value of what a mill is worth.

Mr. Webber stated that Council adopted the 2010 Budget and put together a two-year budget proposal with a five-year outlook similar to Oakland County.

He explained that as Council goes into budget discussions, they can always be looking ahead at the forecasts to make the necessary adjustments.

Mr. Webber and **Mr. Hooper** discussed that one of the recommendations of the committee would be to combine police and road funding into a single public services millage, make it a part of the City Charter so that it would automatically be a part of the Budget for a set period of time and therefore, it would not be necessary to keep bringing the millages for a vote from the residents.

*Discussion evolved around the Charter amendment process to include a single public services millage, if this would include fire services and the impact of commercial tax abatements. The discussion then moved to whether the City has a reserve for tax tribunal cases and **Mr. Hooper** responded that between the City's conservative taxable value approach and the Board of Review resolving most of the cases resulting in very few tax cases going to the State Tax Tribunal level.*

Mr. Webber suggested that the discussion move to the next several spreadsheets organized by levels of recommendation, City Council's ranking, sorted by area, timing and no further action needed. Discussion ensued regarding the various rankings of the recommendations: the completed recommendations, ongoing recommendations and the recommendations that have stalled. He discussed the recommendation of the establishment of a Parks/Bond/Millage Committee to research the possibility of a dedicated Parks Millage which would allow more revenue to be used for police and local road costs. He stated this recommendation had been sent back to the committee for discussion. Then he briefly described the challenge of optimizing the police contract with the Oakland County Sheriffs Office in spite of the language revision. He stated that this challenge resulted in discussion among Council Members about the exploration of a Request for Proposal being submitted to investigate other police contract options.

Discussion among committee members commenced whether there are City restrictions that prohibit the use of other county law enforcement agencies.

Mr. Webber stated his belief that the Michigan State Police Department is not allowed by the State of Michigan's constitution to perform contract law enforcement services. He then discussed that the City directs the Oakland County Sheriffs Office as to what level of law enforcement services it requires and that compared to other communities, we do not employ as many officers for the size of the City's population.

Mr. Dalton, a former police chief of Auburn Hills, shared his knowledge of the cost to Auburn Hills and the number of law enforcement officers. He stated that the City of Rochester Hills is experiencing a cost savings by contracting with the Oakland County Sheriffs Office, additional officers could be provided quickly in the occurrence of a major crime and if there is a bad officer inciting citizen complaints, it is easier to remove an officer under the contract with the Oakland County Sheriffs Office than an officer employed by a city.

Discussion commenced between committee members regarding:

- *The cost of law enforcement*
- *Determination of the size of the millage needed to pay for law enforcement*
- *Reliance on the voters would result in 28 officers instead of 60 officers*
- *No money no services and concern that fire services will also be impacted*
- *Concern about calls from cell phones to 911 not being tracked adequately or categorized as 'fire', 'police' or 'emergency'*

Mr. Hooper responded that the incoming 911 calls from cell phones are registered.

Mr. Zellers was asking about the itemization (i.e. Fire, EMS and Police) of the types of the 7,340 calls reported in 2009.

Mr. Hooper responded that the Fire Department has that specific information.

The discussion moved to the fact that currently, Oakland County Sheriffs Office takes the 911 calls as part of their contract but that there is a Request For Proposal process regarding the City's dispatch service.

Mr. Zellers asked if there were two separate call dispatch centers and what is the cost of having two.

Mr. Webber clarified that he thought the question really being asked in terms of calls received, is how is funding for these services divided and allocated between fire and police. He stated further that the recommendation was to go out for bids to evaluate different options, one of which is the Oakland County Sheriffs Office. He reported that currently, if the Oakland County Sheriffs Office gets the call, they will direct the call and that Fire Station One also receives emergency calls. He stated that there are two people on staff at Fire Station One and that about seven to eight people staff it throughout the day throughout the week at roughly \$1,000,000.00.

Mr. Hooper reported that it is \$540,000.00 in 2010. The cost savings would come in by contracting for dispatch because it would not include health care costs.

Mr. Webber stated that the committee could look into these recommendations and make side comments but that he thought Council wanted the committee to discuss the parks bond millage committee and the formation of such and optimize the Oakland County Sheriffs Office contract. He suggested that the committee move on to the proposed ballot language that was distributed for the committee's review and discussion.

Mr. Hooper stated that he had brought Proposed Ballot Questions A and B for the committee's input, opinions, clarification suggestions, and for their preference of Council Member Yalamanchi's Proposed Ballot Question Option A or the Proposed Ballot Question Option B. Option A does create a fluctuation increase in the expiring, previously-voted bond debt millage of up to 1.14879

mills in the years 2017 through 2020 wherein Option B replaces the expiring, previously-voted bond debt millage and the tax levy is limited to up to 0.3545 mills through year 2020.

*There seemed to be a consensus of the committee that Option A of the proposed Ballot Question was very confusing and would not pass with the voters for that reason. Various committee members asked about the wording of the proposed Ballot language and **Mr. Hooper** explained that City Attorney Staran had stated that the Ballot Question has to ask for a specific millage rate for a specific year and report what the dollar amount is in each year. It was discussed that the Option A and Option B Proposed Language would be presented at the February 22, 2010 City Council meeting for discussion regarding the August 2010 Primary Ballot. It was reported that the Older Persons' Commission will have a note of renewal on the same ballot.*

***Mr. Webber** asked if the Option B Ballot Question would be dedicated for the parks so that parks would benefit from the general funds since it is a parks bond that is expiring.*

***Ms. Soisson** stated that pursuit of such recommendation might result in conflict.*

***Mr. Webber** stated that he is comfortable with it remaining for the local roads.*

There was more discussion on the specific questions in the Public Opinion Survey that was performed through Oakland University and represents an accurate representation of what the population of Rochester Hills' response to the questions. The question was asked regarding how the estimated rates along with the possibility of decreased taxable values were determined.

***Mr. Hooper** stated that City Council could choose to not levy the full amount which led to **Mr. Johnson** asking how this would work because of the assumption that values are decreasing while the millage would be increasing. **Mr. Hooper** directed them to look at and question the millage rate calculation as determined by the Board of Review and that City Council would review millage rates during Budget discussions and could determine to not levy the full amount.*

***Mr. Johnson** responded that if the 'up to' provision is in there, the residents will assume that the full amount will be used.*

***Mr. Hooper** did not agree stating that there is a tenth of a mill left in General Fund and a tenth of a mill left in Fire.*

Discussion turned to the presentation of Option A and Option B - proposed Ballot Questions and which would produce the best result for the care and maintenance of the City's local roads. It was stated that Roger Rousse would be necessary to aide in the educational component of the voters before the primary. It was suggested that the educational component be very simple, very graphic and very specific. It was discussed that if the monies were available

presently, the road conditions could be thoroughly repaired instead of having to wait every other year when the millage comes in.

Mr. Hooper added that the cost of patching intersections for 2010 will be approximately \$2,500,000.00; the residents love their lower tax rate compared to other communities and do not want to pay more taxes.

Discussion turned to the GORB Series - 1998 - bond debt millage that will expire after its ten-year term and the possibility of having a longer bond term period with the proposed Option B Ballot Question.

Mr. Hooper reported during the discussion about the wording of the Ballot Question that, according to City Attorney Staran, the use of 'replace' must be accompanied by the specific purpose of the millage and to provide a source of matching funds to support the special assessment and grant programs.

Discussion then turned to the fact that the local City issues are always placed at the end of Election Ballots. There was discussion about where the Older Persons' Commission issue would be placed on the ballot and it was noted that the library may be placing an item on the ballot as well.

Mr. Webber turned the discussion back to the spreadsheets to report that some of the recommendation items were in mid-process and that the committee is to report back to City Council by May 2010. He added that a preliminary report could be prepared and a request for additional time, if necessary, be made at that time. He stated that the committee would request the City Staff to e-mail a link of the full public survey for the committee members to review.

Mr. Johnson asked for an update on the Road Commission for Oakland County's (RCOC) acceptance of the Environmental Assessment (EA) for the widening of Tienken Road.

Mr. Hooper and **Mr. Webber** explained the difference between 'widening' and the description of through lanes and center turn lanes and the possibility of the construction of a round-about at Tienken and Livernois which would aide to the congestion on Tienken Road but still maintain the three lane option. They reported that there will be discussion and feedback from the residents before a final plan is approved.

Mr. Webber spoke about the Friends of Tienken Road and Dan Keifer meeting with the RCOC to express their concerns and that it appears that the City is not going to lose the funding for the project at this time.

Mr. Hooper reported that the EA has been sent to the Federal Highway Administration for their review.

Ms. Soisson directed the committee back to the Public Opinion Survey, page 12, regarding streets and noted that participants had selected 'millage' for road improvements such as street paving/reconstruction and long-term maintenance

projects, yet every time a millage question is placed on the ballot for those items, it gets turned down.

Mr. Johnson commented that the important question missing from the Public Opinion Survey is whether the survey participants had voted in previous elections.

Mr. Webber commented that when a neighborhood comes together (such as Shadow Woods) for a road improvement or street paving project, they are paying the bulk of the cost and discussed if the benefits that could be realized from a millage.

Mr. Hooper noted that Ms. Soisson lives in Shadow Woods.

Ms. Soisson responded that property values increase for improved roads, a tax rebate is realized on the participants' individual taxes and compared it to senior citizens still paying school taxes as part of maintenance of their property values.

Mr. Dalton thanked Mr. Webber for his notes and made a motion to support the Option B Ballot Question and have it taken before City Council for their discussion and approval. Mr. Cline seconded his motion.

Mr. Hooper reported motion by Dalton, support by Cline and it received a unanimous vote in favor of this motion.

Mr. Johnson questioned the ten-year term length and should it be for a longer term. Numbers were tossed around by committee members such as 15 or 20.

Mr. Hooper shared that a couple of years ago, when the pathway renewal was discussed, it had been his suggestion to change the term to twenty years rather than having to put it to a vote at five or ten years. He reported that it had passed with a twenty-year period. He has received e-mails stating that the twenty-year term is too long and does not allow for economic flexibility.

Ms. Soisson responded that in these situations, not everybody will not be pleased.

The committee concurred and discussed their desire for this to pass, whether it is for a ten-year term or a twenty-year term and that the educational process will play a big part in the success of this Ballot Question. It was asked if Council Members can speak as an advocate for this Ballot Question.

Mr. Hooper stated that the City Attorney cautions the City Council Members against telling the residents to vote yes/no on an election issue at City Council meetings. He did state, however, that in speaking with people on a one-to-one basis, he can share his personal opinions about how residents should vote.

Mr. Johnson asked if the same Ballot Question could be placed on the ballot with the option of a ten-year term or a twenty-year term and **Mr. Hooper**

responded that there would be too confusing.

Mr. Cline responded that the 'yes' votes would split on either question and the 'no' votes would vote both down.

It was discussed by the committee to leave the length of the term period to Council's decision.

Mr. Webber suggested that this could be discussed at the next meeting after discussion at City Council's February 22nd meeting and Mr. Sawdon and Mr. Rousse would be in attendance as well.

Mr. Hooper stated that he liked Mr. Johnson's idea of a community charge spearheading the community educational campaign and could be part of the discussion at the committee's next meeting.

2010-0067 Election of Chairperson

Attachments: [Resolution.pdf](#)

Mr. Webber suggested that the committee could possibly meet in the last week of February and that the discussion should move to the election of a Chairperson for the committee.

Mr. Dalton nominated Don Cline for Chairperson of the committee and the decision was unanimous in favor of Mr. Cline being the Chairperson for the committee.

It was discussed and decided by the committee to wait to elect a Vice Chairperson until all the committee members could be in attendance.

Appointed.

ANY OTHER BUSINESS

Discussion ensued regarding the date of the next committee meeting and a consensus was reached. It was agreed that the focus of the next meeting would be to discuss the outcome of the committee's motion of Option B - Ballot Question at City Council's February 22nd meeting, discuss bonding and SAD Policy with Keith Sawdon, Director of Finance and Roger Rousse, Director of DPS/Engineering to the next committee meeting, discuss the community educational campaign

Mr. Webber announced the next proposed meeting date as Wednesday, February 24, 2010 at 6:00 p.m.

ADJOURNMENT

There being no further business before the committee, Mr. Webber adjourned the meeting at 7:35 p.m.

Michael Webber, City Council Member Representative

*Prepared by Christine A. Wissbrun
Administrative Secretary, City Clerk's Office*