

Minutes of the Budget Workshop & Special Meeting of the
Sparta Township Board-Sparta Civic Center and Zoom
February 25, 2021

The meeting was called to order at 4:00 P.M. by Supervisor Dale Bergman.

Members Present; Dale Bergman, Marcy Savage, Rachel Shangle, Jason Bradford, and Rob Steffens

Members Remote; Barb Johnson and Bill Goodfellow

Members Absent: none

Additions or Corrections to the Agenda – None

PUBLIC COMMENT – Jayne Heath, Historical Commission Chairman, said the Historical Commission had done not meeting or events due to Covid. They are requesting the Township Board give them the same as last year \$13,000.

Lois Lovell, Library Director, along with Debbie Poling, presented Library information. They are requesting the same as last year, \$138,500.

Dan Olney, Fire Chief, presented the proposed budget for the Fire Department. He is requesting the same as last year, \$243,334.00

BUSINESS ITEMS -The Board worked through the budget worksheet, estimating revenues and expenses for the next fiscal year. The Supervisor proposed the following figures for the proposed budget of 2021-2022:

4 Trustees	\$ 9,000
Supervisor	\$24,993.16
Clerk	\$37,000
Treasurer	\$37,000
Sexton	\$ 9,500
Sexton Assist.	\$ 500
Building Insp.	\$26,000
Electrical Insp.	\$ 50.00 per insp.
Mechanical Insp.	\$ 50.00 per insp.
Plumbing Insp.	\$ 50.00 per insp.
Grave Digger	\$19,900

Recommendations for the Library include:

General Operations	\$138,500
Bldg. & Grounds	\$ 30,000
Recommendations for the Fire Department	\$243,334
Recommendations for the Hist. Comm.	\$ 13,000
Bldg. & Grounds	\$ 3,500

Savage asked the Board for an increase for the deputy clerk of \$1.25 per hour.

Shangle asked the Board for an increase for the deputy treasurer of 1.00 per hour.

Savage presented a letter about the additional workload Clerks have, due to election changes. Goodfellow, presented a study he had done for elected officials salaries in other Townships.

PUBLIC COMMENT – None

ADJOURNMENT - Motion to adjourn by Johnson, 2nd by Savage

Carried 7-0

The meeting was adjourned at 5:19 P.M

Marcy Savage- Sparta Twp Clerk

Sparta Township Salary Comparison Study:

Background:

The study included 21 of 21 Kent County township along with 3 neighboring Ottawa County Townships which have provided or posted their annual budgets for years between 2019-2021.

The responsibilities for all elected township officials have the same statutory requirements. All townships have additional departments and duties which increase the requirements/responsibilities of all the elected township officials.

Most townships have deputies, some townships have a Deputy Supervisor, an Office Manager and or Administration Assistants. Sparta township has a deputy Clerk and deputy Treasure.

Libraries: Every township in Kent County has library availability. Sparta Township and the City of Cedar Springs are the only townships in the study that have Lakeland District Libraries. The other townships have Kent County District Libraries. Cascade Township also has a Library milage and is managed by the township board.

Cemeteries: All townships in Kent County and the study townships in Ottawa Townships have cemeteries.

Parks: All other townships in the studies have parks that the township boards oversee. The exception is Tyrone and Sparta Township which has no township managed parks.

Fire Protection: All townships within the county and Ottawa township study have fire protection/fire departments. Vergennes & Nelson Township and Wright & Tallmadge Townships have a joint Fire Agreement and Lowell Township is contracted with City of Lowell. Sparta Township is the only township that has a Fire Board which oversees the entire fire department operations and budgets and is not accountable/overseen or directed by the township board.

Sewer & Water: There are 15 townships in the study which control and or operate sewer and or water and are accountable to the township board. Sparta Township provides no sewer or water services.

Police protection, Ambulance service, Recreation Centers, Seniors Centers, Museums, and management of lakes and lake services: There are 18 townships within the study which provide these types of service. Sparta Township does not provide or are accountable for any of these additional services other than Sparta Township donates money/writes a check to the township Historical Society.

All the information/data from all the Townships budgets have been compiled into (2) analytical studies. One cost analysis was based on using all the (24) townships in the study. While the second cost analysis study only includes the (15) townships which most closely aligns with Sparta Township in population and budget. In the "all" townships study and (15) township study, where there are office managers, administration assistants or office assistances, those costs were allocated into Supervisor, Clerk or Treasure's office total budget costs. All other additional costs, retirement funds, medical insurance and withhold taxes were included in the total costs of each office.

In summarizing all the data for the study, the population/census was taken from the 2010 census. As stated in several Sparta Township board meetings, the township does not support the Village, so only the township population was used for this study. With the "all" and selected (15) annual township budgets, it includes all the revenues collected, taxes, millage, special millage, state share etc. All townships and the selected (15) townships included in the study with exception of "Sparta Township" manage, monitor, direct, pay invoices, salaries etc. for their Fire Department, Library and Parks. Sparta is the only township in Kent County which collects millage for the fire department and library and does not provide any township support/management. (other than write a check and approve the amount of \$\$\$ the township will contribute to each.) These special millage revenues have been removed from the Sparta Township Budget data used in

the study. In addition, Sparta and Tyrone Townships are the only townships which does not have a park. All the other townships support, manages, organize and control their parks. (Sparta does write a check and approve the amount of \$\$\$ the township will contribute to SARA.)

Both Analysis is based on the Census per 1000 residents and the budget per \$100,000 to determine the township average.

All Township Study: 24 townships.

Average census per all townships: 9910	Sparta Township census: 4959	50.0% of average
Average Budget per all townships \$3,338,850	Sparta Township budget: \$1,079,400	32.3% of average

All Township Average Salary based on Census of 9,910 and Budget of \$3,338,850 (24) Townships,

Average Supervisor Office Salary: \$75,711
 Average Clerk's Office Salary: \$94,143
 Average Treasure's Office Salary: \$96,839

What Sparta Township Office Salaries should be based on (24) township using average Census data.

Existing Supervisor's Office Salary: \$27,043	By Census Supervisor's Office Salary: \$37,866	at 71.4%
Existing Clerk's Office Salary: \$61,360	By Census Clerk's Office Salary: \$47,110	at 130.3%
Existing Treasurer's Office Salary: \$50,910	By Census Treasurer's Office Salary: \$48,459	at 105.1%

What Sparta Township Office Salaries should be based on (24) township using average Budget data.

Existing Supervisor's Office Salary: \$27,043	By Census Supervisor's Office Salary: \$24,473	at 110.5%
Existing Clerk's Office Salary: \$61,360	By Census Clerk's Office Salary: \$30,432	at 201.6%
Existing Treasurer's Office Salary: \$50,910	By Census Treasurer's Office Salary: \$31,303	at 162.4%

The Second cost analysis includes townships (15) which more closely aligns with Sparta Township in population/ census and budget:

The list below are the townships included in the second study: Tyrone, census 4731, annual budget \$769,064.

Algoma, census 9932, annual budget \$2,457,574	Cortland, census 7678, annual budget \$1,559,600
Grattan, census 3621, annual budget \$3,640,695	Lowell, census 5949, annual budget \$753,000
Oakfield, census 5782, annual budget \$1,566,474	Solon, census 5974, annual budget \$1,408,685
Sparta, census 4959, annual budget \$1,079,400	Spencer, census 3960, annual budget \$700,068
Vergennes, census 4189, annual budget \$663,550	Chester, census 1938, annual budget \$335,466
Wright, census 4137, annual budget \$567,401	Blendon, census 5772, annual budget \$1,726,000
Nelson, census 4764, annual budget \$760,880.	Bowie, census 3084, annual budget \$1,878,957

Select Township Study: 15 townships.

Average census per 15 townships: 5032 Sparta Township census: 4959 98.5% of average
Average Budget per 15 townships \$1,324,499 Sparta Township budget: \$1,079,400 81.5%% of average

Select Township Average Salary based on Census of 5242 and Budget of \$1,371,493 selected (15) Townships,

Average Supervisor Office Salary: \$33,832

Average Clerk's Office Salary: \$50,125

Average Treasure's Office Salary: \$45,834

What Sparta Township Salaries should be based on (15) township using average Census data.

Existing Supervisor's Office Salary: \$27,043	By Census Supervisor's Office Salary: \$32,302	at 83.7%
Existing Clerk's Office Salary: \$61,360	By Census Clerk's Office Salary: \$47,857	at 128.2%
Existing Treasurer's Office Salary: \$50,910	By Census Treasurer's Office Salary: \$43,761	at 116.3%

What Sparta Township Salaries should be based on (15) township using average Budget data.

Existing Supervisor's Office Salary: \$27,043	By Budget Supervisor's Office Salary: \$27,263	at 99.2%
Existing Clerk's Office Salary: \$61,360	By Budget Clerk's Office Salary: \$40,392	at 151.9%
Existing Treasurer's Office Salary: \$50,910	By Budget Treasurer's Office Salary: \$36,934	at 137.8%

In summary: The township's elected officials in Sparta have less responsibility than all the other township's elected officials in the study.

The pay scale for the office of Supervisor is below the average township salaries for both study groups with exception of the All-Township Budget study. The Sparta Township Office of Supervisor salary is between (71% - 111%) of the other townships in the studies.

The pay scale for the office of Clerk is substantially higher than the average township salaries for all study groups. The Sparta Township Office of Clerk salary is between (128% - 202%) higher than other townships in the studies.

The pay scale for the office of Treasure is substantially higher than the average township salaries for both study groups. The Sparta Township Office of Treasure salary is between (105% - 162%) higher than other townships in the studies.

Note: All data used in the study is available on township's web sites or I have a copy of the budgets that were sent to me.

The Study compiled and summarized by: W. Goodfellow 1-28-21

Township Board Members,

As you are aware, the responsibilities surrounding elections have changed drastically over the years. Not only has the number of registered voters increased, due to proposal 18-3, the number of voters voting absentee has almost tripled.

Nov. 2010- 833 absentee voters. November 2018- 1551 absentee voters, Now in 2020- 2257 absentee voters.

They have done a study about how long it takes to process an absentee ballot and it takes approximately 4 minutes a piece. This has increased my workload all by itself to more than 100 hours per election, just to process absentee ballots. Also, because of the large number of absentee ballots I have gone from 4 tabulators to 7 tabulators. All of the tabulators have to be tested before every election to make sure they work properly and are counting accurately, and this is quite a process.

Since proposal 18-3 we have also had a steady increase in traffic in the office the two weeks prior to an election registering people to vote and voting absentee. Also, the number of people that now call the office to ask questions about elections that the Clerk and the Deputy have to answer has increased immensely.

They have also increased the number of hours I am required to work before an election from 4 to 8 hours on the Saturday prior to an election.

The number of election inspectors that I need to hire has also increased due to the higher volume of voters. I also have to have an additional office staff to help register voters and issue ballots the day of the election. All this adds to many extra hours of planning, processing ballots, training, moving equipment, and preparing for election day. Not only has the work load increased but the amount of responsibility and stress of working an ever changing job has also increased.

We also just received a letter from the Secretary of State with a list of new rules and regulations that she is trying to implement as quickly as possible. Each of these things have the potential to add many more hours to running an election.

I do want to be clear, I do have an awesome, fabulous, outstanding, Deputy Clerk, Betsy, who is willing to work extra during election time and puts in many extra hours helping to relieve the workload.

This election process is in addition to the many regular daily duties I do as Clerk.

- maintaining and managing all Township records
- overseeing 4 Cemeteries
- paying all Township Bills
- Payroll and the filing of quarterly and yearly reports for Federal and State, including W-2's and 1099's.
- Freedom of information Act Coordinator
- Office supply purchasing
- Office managing
- and various other duties

A change in compensation for the office of the Clerk should be reflective of the drastic growth in work and responsibility load. Therefore, I respectfully requesting the Clerks salary to be changed to \$45,000.00. After talking to some Clerks in Kent County in larger and smaller jurisdictions this is the base amount that a Clerk should be making with the current workload. Please note this is extraordinarily difficult to be placed in this position but I believe this is the right thing to do and I hope you will support me.

Thank you,
Marcy Savage