Levy Committee Chair Richard Krolak called the meeting to order at 2:04 pm.

Present or Via GoTo: Committee Chair Rich Krolak

 Board Treasurer Janel Gifford

 Fire Chief Bryan Daniels

 Division Chief Tom Jackson

 Admin. Asst. Lynn Johnson

Board President Richard Krolak called the Serial Levy Committee meeting to order, and all present recited the Pledge of Allegiance.

Richard gave a brief synopsis of the last meeting and noted that our target date is May of 2024, and that we need to have the ballot title by March 1st and three weeks later all of the forms will have to be in. Any arguments from the public are due by March 25th. Richard said, last time we met we talked about five years or less, and the question then became the amount; do we request an increase or stay where we currently are? Richard continued by saying he has given this a lot of thought and delved into the public’s ability to pay. He noted we have three zip codes in our response area and the median family income is in the mid forty thousands, housing values are around $350,000.00, with five percent of the houses being listed as vacation rentals, and so far the owners of those houses have put off any restrictions.

Rich then said that he is warming to the idea that Bob had raised previously, which is to go with three years at the current rate. He explained his reasoning; one we would have a better idea where we are relative to district costs, and two the possibility or assumption that the economy improves. Rich continued by explaining that seventy percent of the district relies on IRA’s and 401K’s, and explained in further detail how that may affect their voting. He advised his position at this time is three years at the current rate. Rich acknowledged that he knows Janel has a different perspective.

Janel advised that she does not believe that we will know more in three years, and from prior experience, believes that is a false assumption that we will know more about our finances. She also advised keeping the current rate does not make sense. Janel said, we should look at an amount that we at least think will make us whole. A lengthy conversation continued between the two that included property tax revenue, refurbishment of rolling stock, water tender purchase, carryover money, the Union contract, balance forward money, and putting money in reserves.

Chief Daniels weighed in at Richards request and noted that a three-year levy makes recruitment retention more difficult and there is unknown cost associated with that. He added we do have to stay competitive in the job market and if you throw in the component of using a vote to only go out for three years at the current rate our organization won’t look as secure as it would if we get a five-year levy. He advised he thinks it is achievable to pass that measure, but asked will the affects be good for the District? He continued by noting that his projections show that we would need at least $2.30 per thousand to meet the demands that we have; can we get by with less, he does not know, we would have to figure that out and added he does not support going out for a three-year levy or for the current rate. The discussion continued regarding the amount, time, and potential scenarios.

Janel brought up that we need to think about our explanatory statement, and Rich replied you need to make a good case. Janel replied we have to be very clear and transparent. Rich said at some point there needs to be clarity around the number, the time, and what the argument is going to be. A lengthy discussion continued amongst the committee members without a clear agreement on the amount or length.

Rich said in summarization we need to have closure on this no later than our December meeting which means agreement on timeline, amount, and justification to be approved by the Board.

Janel asked what if we were to task the committee members with coming up with their version of what we should do, and then we would have two maybe three versions to present. Rich replied to Janel: why don’t we find time to sit down and talk about it and we can come up with high, low, and medium numbers to present at the next meeting.

Meeting adjourned at 2:54 p.m.