

Indian Creek budget likely to be contested at state hearing today

Residents questioning township's firefighting, legal services funding

By Bethany Nolan
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Indian Creek Township residents are expected to turn out en masse this morning to complain about the township's 2008 budget during a hearing with Department of Local Government Finance officials.

The hearing is the last step for many of the taxing entities whose budgets will be reviewed today. But it's the first chance township residents have had since a meeting last August to voice their displeasure with the budget, township resident Christine Conrad said Monday.

At that meeting, more than 100 people watched the township board vote 2-1 in favor of a 92 percent increase in the budget. Board member Cheryl Ann Munson voted no.

Township Trustee Linda Hollingsworth's budget increased the town's firefighting fund by 111 percent, adding \$55,000 from the township's savings. At the time, she said she was advised by the State Board of Accounts to incorporate the reserve funds into her budget, but promised it wouldn't be spent.

The budget also included an increased sum for legal services. At the time, Hollingsworth was embroiled in a lawsuit with the township volunteer fire department, seeking to evict them and start her own force. However, she subsequently lost that suit.

Angry residents signed several petitions at the time, alleging timely, accurate and complete information about the budget wasn't available to residents, that the 2008 fire fund figures were inaccurate and that the entire budget included large increases without explanation or rationale.

Conrad said residents are concerned about the budget issues and want the Department of Local Government Finance, which is responsible for ensuring local government budgeting is carried out according to state law, to hear their concerns.

The township meeting begins at 10 a.m. in the upstairs meeting room of the courthouse. Hearings for all other taxing units will begin at 8:30 a.m., with the exception of Monroe County Community School Corp., which will have a hearing at 11 a.m.

The meetings are the last hoop the units must jump through at the state level before officials will receive a tax rate, which is needed before property tax bills can be calculated. County treasurer Barbara Clark has said it will likely be the first of July before bills go out.

Want to participate?

Officials with the Department of Local Government Finance will be at the upstairs meeting room of the Monroe County Courthouse today for public hearings on the 2008 budgets for all taxing units. Here's a look at the schedule:

8:30 A.M.

Richland-Bean Blossom Community School Corp.

Bloomington

Stinesville

Ellettsville

Monroe County Public Library

Perry-Clear Creek Fire District

Bloomington Transportation

Monroe County Solid Waste District

Lake Lemon Conservancy District

Bean Blossom Township

Benton Township

Bloomington Township

Clear Creek Township

Perry Township

Polk Township

Richland Township

Salt Creek Township

Van Buren Township

Washington Township

Monroe County Welfare

Monroe County

Monroe County Redevelopment Commission

Bloomington Redevelopment Commission

10 A.M.

Indian Creek Township

11 A.M.

Monroe County Community School Corp.