

Questions raised about township's bookkeeping

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Questions about last year's books were raised during a report on expenditures given by the Indian Creek Township board.

During Friday's meeting, the board discussed the 2007 expenditures report and the results of a state audit. Following the reading of the report, board member Cheryl Munson questioned the whereabouts of two checks and why one expenditure was paid from the township fund.

By the end of the meeting, the board decided it would meet again to approve the report, as it needed to answer Munson's questions.

Munson said that documents she received through the Freedom of Information Act did not show the deposit of a County Option Income Tax check issued in August. The COIT check, in the amount of \$1,610.34, had not cleared the bank, according to Munson.

"I deposit the checks as soon as I get them," trustee Linda Hollingsworth said.

Munson expressed concern that the numbers presented in the annual expenditures report would be wrong until the COIT check was accounted for.

"It's a big question," Munson said.

"It's a big question to me, too, because I made all the deposits," Hollingsworth answered.

Munson also questioned where the deposit of the November check from the Commercial Vehicle Excise Tax went.

"Something is very strange," Munson said. "I don't know what it is."

Hollingsworth, who did not have the books on hand to consult, indicated she may have divided up the proceeds from the check into different funds.

A check written to cover funds for an emergency medical technician was also called into question. Munson asked why the check was paid from the township fund instead of the firefighters fund. After much contentious discussion, Hollingsworth said she believed it might have been a simple error.

Munson also questioned the recently released examination into the township's records by the State Board of Accounts. The report states that two official bonds were not recorded. The report also states that public records retention rules were not followed, as Hollingsworth "disposed of the original 2007 ledger sheets and posted the 2007 transactions on a new Form 1C."

The report also pointed out that "professional services expenditures for 2007 were \$23,333.61 more than the budgeted appropriations on Oct. 31, 2007." The state also pointed out that funds received by the state could not be included in a budget estimate by a political subdivision. The report states that revenue from the County Option Income Tax were included in the budget estimate as revenue in the township's firefighting fund.

Although the board did not address the report, the report did include a response from attorney Guy Loftman, who provided explanations from Hollingsworth.

In Loftman's letter dated Dec. 17, 2007, he stated that Hollingsworth admitted to State Board of Accounts auditor Phyllis Moffatt that "she has not mastered all of the knowledge necessary to be able to comply with the multiplicity of technical requirements that protect the process of spending public funds."

Also on the agenda, Hollingsworth said she may begin to ask for mileage reimbursement for trips she must make into Bloomington for township business. Hollingsworth threatened that "if this keeps up," she will ask for mileage to pay for the extra trips she must make to Bloomington to copy records requested by Munson and township residents. During public comment, many residents expressed interest in the board scheduling its next meeting during the evening. Munson said the meeting was previously held in the evening, when it was easier for more people to attend. Because Friday's meeting was held at 2 p.m., some residents commented that they needed to leave work to attend.

After the meeting, Hollingsworth said the first board meeting was scheduled in the afternoon because board member Mike Lucas had a conflict with another meeting. Lucas admitted that he is a board member of a musician's union and that group meets the second Tuesday of every month.

Hollingsworth also said that she changed the meeting because it was more convenient for her, and she doesn't like to come home to an empty home at night. She said she would announce the next meeting through proper channels and said she would announce then whether the meeting would be in the afternoon or evening.