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Lansing OKs tax hike at 4%

Increase tied to inflation, cost of living, service fee increases

By Phil Rockrohr

Lansing trustees approved a levy Tuesday requesting \$5.1 million from village property owners, up 4 percent from last year.

The levy includes a \$990,648 request from the Lansing Public Library. Lansing trustees approve and submit the library's property tax request along with its own each year.

The levy ordinance was unanimously approved. The Cook County Clerk's office will determine how much of the board's request the village will receive.

Trustee Dan Podgorski, chairman of the board's Finance Committee, said the

village's portion — \$4,075,893 — of the levy is up \$150,829, or 3.8 percent, from last year's levy. The library's portion is up \$42,660, or 4.5 percent, Podgorski said.

"The increase is under 5 percent," he said. "The levy is very similar to the increase we asked for last year."

The primary difference between the two levies is that last year Lansing specifically increased its request to finance the hiring of crossing guards in the Police Department, Podgorski said.

"We have no particular line item that increases the levy this year," he said.

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'Creds' from gong

Hike

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This year's increase is tied mainly to inflation, or cost-of-living increases for various village services, Podgorski said. For example, employee salaries increased an average of 3.5 percent, he said.

Any excess funds will cover ever-rising health insurance costs, Podgorski said. An increase in the general fund should cover those higher expenses this year, he said.

"This will at least help us keep up with the costs of health insurance," Podgorski said.

A ceiling on village claims continues to rise each year, increasing Lansing's premiums, he said. This year individual employees may

submit claims of up to \$60,000, and the village as a whole may submit claims of up to \$1.1 million, Podgorski said.

"We have to make some headroom in that area," he said. "That is one of the reasons I felt the overall increase was justified this year."

In other action Tuesday, the board voted 5-1 to approve the construction of a shooting range next door to Pelcher's Gun Supply, 18149 Greenwood Ave.

The shooting range, which developers said would be limited to handguns and low-caliber rifles, is planned for construction in the basement of an office complex on the site adjacent to the gun shop.

The \$350,000, 3,500-square-foot office building is to contain four office and the soundproof shooting range in the basement.

Larry Pelcher, owner of the gun

shop, said it is too early to say when developers would begin construction. Pelcher and his partner, School Wheaton, said development is contingent upon Lansing offering them tax increment financing funds from the village's Ridge Road TIF district.

Trustee Patti Leach, who voted against the project, said she believes the gun range would be safe, but it should not be located so close to a nearby parcel the village plans to acquire and eventually use for a bicycle trail.

Trustee Tom Eisha, chairman of the board's Public Safety and Welfare Committee, said the shooting range would be "well below ground level" and entirely soundproof.

"No one can be harmed in any way," Eisha said. "Mr. Pelcher is a part-time police officer, and he will be very careful."