

DAILY HERALD (Sept 29, 2010)

Wauconda village trustees are considering hiring a grant writer to help the police and other village departments find money for projects not included in the shrinking budget.

Police Chief Douglas R. Larsson presented the concept to the board, meeting as a committee of the whole Tuesday, with his first priority being to find grant money for a new radio system with more reliable means of sending messages.

The village has already cut 20 employees to balance the \$14.6 million operating budget, and it has a referendum on the Nov. 2 ballot that would shift the cost of providing services from the Wauconda Fire Protection District from the village budget to individual property taxpayers.

That shift, coupled with a cut of the village utility tax, means the owner of a \$200,000 house would see their annual property tax bill rise by about \$159.

Without voter approval, the village is looking at continuing to pay for fire services from the village budget by making cuts in other areas such as police and public works services.

"In a perfect world, we would have someone on staff to do grant writing. No matter how the referendum turns out, I think the village would benefit (from a grant consultant)," Larsson told board members.

His proposal is to hire Grant Writing Consultants L.L.C. of Algonquin for \$7,000 to write and manage grants for one year. The company's president, Todd M. Kupsak, has had 15 years of experience in writing grants for clients including the village of Norridge, Judson University in Elgin, and police departments in Addison, Forest Park and Rolling Meadows.

The village of Wauconda is not on the approved list of grantees with the state of Illinois Department of Commerce and Economic Opportunity, and it may be missing opportunities for grants from state legislators because it is not in the appropriate communication network, Larsson said.

"I think we will easily make back the money we pay him," Larsson said, adding any grant application would be authorized by the village board and no grants requiring matching funds would be sought.

The village board will take formal action on the proposal at the Oct. 5 regular village board meeting.