

Budget Work Session Notes

10/1/2024

In attendance:

Board of Supervisors: Jennifer Herring, Chairman, Barbara N. Lyons, Vice-chairman, Judy Dixon, Member, Nancy Santacecilia, member, and Dan Wood, member.

Finance Committee: Eric Cornwell, Chairman; Brenda Bray, Vice Chairman; Christina Maida and Jason Showmaker.

Others in attendance included: Township Manager, Stephanie Mason, Assistant Township Manager, Andrea Mergner, Finance Director, Ken Wallace, Assistant Finance Director, Anne Marie Dobson, Director of Operations, Dave Tomko, Director of Parks & Recreation, Karen Sweeney, Township Budget Analyst, Ed Ebenbach, and Lt. Charles Zeigler.

Ms. Herring welcomed everyone and called the meeting to order at 5:00 pm and thanked the staff.

Ms. Sweeney presented on expenses and budget planning for the Parks & Recreation Department. She summarized that the staff is currently continuing to administer day-to-day operations while preparing for the Community Recreation Center (CRC) and new courts to be open to the public and stated that this entails developing operational protocols for the CRC and courts, formulating rental fee structures, developing marketing and promotional material, and continuing to discuss expansion and revenue goals.

Ms. Sweeney presented the year-to-year financial performance and provided estimates for the 2025 revenue and expenses. The 2025 projections show an increase due to anticipated growth and revenue potential, as well as higher wages resulting from additional staffing. She also shared an organizational chart that illustrates the department's structure, highlighting the addition of three part-time employees and the transition of one current part-time employee to a full-time position in 2025.

The Board discussed staffing, the fee structure, and potential partners. Ms. Sweeney stated that the staff is continuing to do research and working on building relationships. Ms. Santacecilia suggested connecting with DelVal University. Ms. Mason stated that we have a connection with the Del Val through our association the DART System.

Mr. Cornwell asked about marketing of the programs and events and if one of the proposed part time staff members will be focused on marketing and social media. Ms. Sweeney addressed how marketing and social media are handled.

Ms. Santacecilia asked if there was an option to not bring all the part time staff in at once but step them in as the programs are built. Ms. Sweeney said it is an option but will affect the hours of operation as someone will always need to be in the building.

Mr. Tomko presented the year-to-year operations and financial performance of Public Works. He noted that in 2024, the Township hired two new full-time employees for about half the year and filled a nine-month vacancy in the road department. For the 2025 budget, there are no requests for additional full-time Public Works employees, but there is a request for a part-time administrative assistant. This request has been approved, and the change is reflected in the 2024-2025 wage adjustments.

Mr. Tomko also explained that engineering expenses have increased due to various capital projects, including the road program, parks and trails, roads and bridges, and the Community Recreation Center. He stated they are now tracking engineering costs by project. Instead of being drawn from Fund 1, these costs will be charged to Fund 53, which is supported by millage.

Mr. Wallace summarized that the professional fees are following the projects.

Mr. Tomko added that there is a slight increase in the Parks Maintenance budget to support ongoing maintenance efforts and to ensure adequate snow and ice supplies for the upcoming winter, and that the other line item is like a catch all and includes equipment and training.

Ms. Lyons stated that there is an increase in wages from 2024 – 2025 and asked if that is a percentage of increase. Ms. Dobson stated that yes, the 3.5% salary increase is based on what the Board directed following a personnel discussion with the manager.

Ms. Dobson shared the working capital plan and stated that all capital requested were received equally a total of \$9.3 million with an unfunded amount of \$3.4 million but stated that the 2024 forecasts a revenue surplus in the amount of \$1.3 million and stated the finance department is recommending the surplus be used to fund capital.

Ms. Dobson summarized the capital funding priority categories including safety, maintenance, trails, replacement, and beneficial, and summarized the steps the finance department used to lower the capital spending to fit within the surplus.

Ms. Dobson stated that after working with the department heads, have identified a capital plan that includes the capital necessary for 2025 which includes the commitments by grants, signed contracts or projects that have already started and stated they have agreed and were able to create a capital plan for \$7.1 million with an unfunded amount of \$1.5 million. She added that they have identified three capital projects that could be accomplished should there be any additional surplus, which at that point a budget amendment would be before the board. These projects include finishing the public works building fit out, the lower and administrative parking lot pavement, and the purchase of a new facilities vehicle. She stated that there are some projects where the Township needs to float the money for reimbursement later which is why there is a \$200,000 buffer. Ms. Dobson stated the finance department will continue to work closely with management and stated that the Board has been presented with the 2025 Budget Book showing the capital for 2025.

Ms. Dixon inquired about the EV vehicle summary, noting that the estimated cost for the charging infrastructure seemed high. The Board then discussed various charging options and the need to install infrastructure at the Administrative Building that would accommodate both police and administrative vehicles.

The Board discussed different options of hybrid, and EV vehicles. Ms. Herring stated that at this time, she is not comfortable with an EV for the police because of safety concerns. She is comfortable with hybrids.

Lt. Zeigler stated that he is comfortable with hybrids for both the two police vehicles that they have budgeted for this year and stated that he chose the ICE vehicle (Ford Escape) due to cost and stated that those vehicles only drive about 4,500 miles a year and stated there about an \$8,000 price difference and stated the gas savings with the hybrid would never amount to difference.

Ms. Mason stated that the other vehicle that could be considered for EV or hybrid is the admin shared use vehicle. The Board discussed the options and costs with the EV vs. hybrid for the admin vehicle.

Ms. Dixon stated she would like to see the numbers re-visited.

Ms. Herring expressed that she does not believe self-charging hybrids will meet the Township's needs and would like to see a plug-in hybrid for the police vehicles.

Ms. Mason stated that the staff will reevaluate the costs of charging infrastructure for a potential EV administrative vehicle.

Mr. Wood stated the Township should start to plan where the infrastructure will be placed in the future to meet future needs.

There was a consensus among the Board to move forward with two hybrids for the police vehicles.

The Board discussed the parking at the Dog Park and Central Park.

Ms. Santacecilia expressed a desire for more parking at Central Park. Mr. Tomko responded by explaining that the parking included in the CRC project was designed to accommodate the new facilities. He added that the New Britain Road parking area serves the fields. He acknowledged that the Township has historically had limited parking and emphasized the need to balance cost, demand, and the impact on stormwater management. Mr. Tomko also noted that the Township staff has done an excellent job ensuring concert attendees are parked safely, with well-lit paths, allowing the current setup to function effectively despite the challenges.

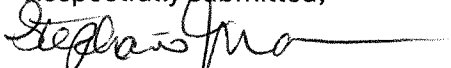
Ms. Santacecilia asked about trails and stated she feels we have an excess and should be focusing on other areas of the Township. Ms. Herring stated that the Township is not only focusing on trails and that is evident with the Community Recreation Center and the Central Park Project and mentioned that walkability is an asset to the homes in this community.

Ms. Brown stated that our trails are valuable for the community.

Ms. Dobson stated that the Board will need to future discuss the funding for capital projects for the following years of 2026-2029 at the next Budget Work Session on October 15, 2024, at 5 pm.

The meeting adjourned at 6:45pm.

Respectfully submitted,



Stephanie J. Mason
Township Secretary