

Budget Work Session Notes

10/15/2024

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: Michael Ivici, Christina Maida, Eric Cornwell, Jason Showmaker, and Brenda Bray.

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 called the meeting to order at 5:00 PM.

Ms. Dobson summarized the 2024 highlights and stated that the Township is projected to end 2024 with a surplus of \$1.2M that will be used to fund 2025 capital and stated that this surplus is due to interest, building permits, transfer tax, EIT and savings on the expense side with contributors being delayed hiring in various departments. Additionally, Ms. Dobson stated that there are some engineering and unbudgeted projects including the DCED baseline testing and the Turk Road traffic calming study created some overages.

Ms. Dobson highlighted the proposed 2025 capital.

Ms. Dixon stated that she understands there are limited options available for EV vehicles and expressed a want for the Township to move forward with the purchase of the Mach E – AWD. The Board discussed the cost and rebate options for the EV Mach E as an Administrative shared use vehicle.

Ms. Santacecilia asked about leasing vehicles. Mr. Wallace stated that they are looking into leasing and what the interest rates would be.

Ms. Dixon stated that the Board committed to Ready for 100 initiative and Ms. Herring agreed. Ms. Santacecilia expressed budget concerns, questioning the alignment with current priorities.

Ms. Mason stated she has discussed delaying the 21-year-old Crown Vic's replacement, but stated it was suggested by the Fleet Manager that it be removed from the fleet by the New Year due to its condition.

Ms. Santacecilia asked if other municipalities have administrative vehicles, and Mr. Wallace stated that they do.

The board reached a consensus on the decision to budget for the interceptor, which is to be fitted out for police use, the hybrid self-charging Ford Escape for detective use, and the Mach EV for administrative use, with all members in agreement except for Mrs. Santacecilia, who voted nay.

Ms. Dobson stated that the additional piece to the proposed capital is the amendment to CapEx 24-16 to include the police radios of \$235K with an offsetting grant.

The Finance Department presented the proposed 2025 operating budget, highlighting a projected 2% growth in Earned Income Tax (EIT) revenue. The budget includes a 4.5% contractual wage increase for uniformed employees and a \$341,000 increase in non-uniform wages. This increase accounts for five full-time employees who will have completed a full year by 2025, additional new hires planned for 2025, and pension contributions for eligible employees.

Ms. Santacecilia inquired about parking on New Britain Road and suggested that surplus funds could potentially be used to support it. Ms. Lyons responded that a funding opportunity might be available in the future. The board then reached a consensus to forgo the New Britain Road parking project at this time, with all members in agreement except for Mrs. Santacecilia, who voted nay.

Ms. Dobson stated that the proposed millage rate to fund the General Fund, Parks & Recreation, Debt Service, and Roads & Bridges is set at 3.695 mills. Mr. Ebenbach then presented the model used to develop this proposed millage plan.

Ms. Santacecilia asked about future planning for funding the fire companies. Ms. Mason stated that

Nancy asked Jen about her attendance of the fire companies and asked about the township planning for fire services. Ms. Mason stated that the Doylestown Fire Company is having a Department of Community and Economic Development (DCED) fire study completed and that the Township will receive results from that report to see what in the future might be needed.

Mr. Wood asked what the proposed tax increase were when 2025 was discussed last year.

Mr. Ebenbach summarized the differences and the changes by fund.

Ms. Bray stated that that Township has a history of having positive variances.

Ms. Dobson presented a graph summarizing the millage rates of surrounding municipalities. She also highlighted key points of the 2026-2029 capital plan, noting that capital requests continue to exceed the Township's borrowing capacity. As a result, the management team will work to improve the process for prioritizing and limiting capital requests and will explore alternative funding options for capital projects.

Ms. Santacecilia asked about the environmental impact of the trails.

The board reached a consensus for the finance department to proceed with preparing the 2025 budget.

The meeting was adjourned at 5:58 pm.