

MINUTES

NOVEMBER 6, 2024 -- SPECIAL BUDGET MEETING

LOWER SWATARA TOWNSHIP BOARD OF COMMISSIONERS

The November 6, 2024 Special Budget Meeting of the Lower Swatara Township Board of Commissioners was called to order at 6:30 P.M. by President Jon G. Wilt. President Wilt called for the pledge of allegiance followed by a moment of silence.

The following officials were in attendance:

- Jon G. Wilt, President
- Todd F. Truntz, Vice President
- Ronald J. Paul, Assistant Secretary
- Michael J. Davies, Commissioner
- Christopher DeHart, Commissioner
- Zachary Border, Manager
- Tracey Bechtel, Township Secretary
- Michael McAuliffe Miller, Solicitor
- Rebecca McClain, Accounting Manager
- Shawn Fabian, HRG
- Don Fure, Director of Codes and Planning
- Scott Washinger, Public Works Director
- Tom Bell, Jr., Police Chief

Residents and visitors in attendance: None

President Wilt noted the purpose of this Special Budget Meeting, is to publicly present the draft of the 2025 General Fund Budget document.

Commissioner Davies, Budget & Finance Chairman, reported that this is an overview of the 2025 budget. This draft budget sets the real estate tax rate at 4.28 mills. The tax rates are unchanged from 2024. The Local Services Tax will remain at \$52 per employee within the Township, and the annual Per Capita Tax remains at \$10 per resident between the ages of 18 and 72. The Occupation Tax for residents earning more than \$12,000 per calendar year remains the same at \$25. As a reminder to residents the Board of Commissioners voted to change the Per Capita tax collection agency from Berkheimer to Keystone Collections for the 2024 tax year. If you have not received a bill or have questions, please contact the Township Accounting Manager, Rebecca McClain.

General Fund revenues in the 2025 budget will decrease by 22.75% and expenses will decrease by 17.36%. Much of this is driven by the American Rescue Plan Act (commonly referred to as ARPA) funds that were budgeted in the 2024 budget and needed to be spent within this year. The ARPA funds were used to pay for a portion of the new Shireman Park. The General Fund will continue to carry a fund balance to cover

shortfalls in revenues. This year \$539,515 of fund balance will be used to cover expenditures and balance the budget.

Road maintenance projects will continue to be funded through the Township's annual Highway Aid funds from the state. No road projects were paid for from these funds in 2024 but in 2025 it is estimated that \$450,000 will be spent on upgrades and improvements.

Commissioner Davies then turned over the floor to Rebecca McClain, Accounting Manager, who provided a PowerPoint presentation of the details of the proposed 2025 General Fund Budget.

Ms. McClain noted that when we first sat down and went through the budget process, we were almost two million dollars apart. We had many meetings and came up with things that we could take out to get us down to the \$539,515 that we have to use from the reserves to balance the budget.

Like Commissioner Davies stated, the tax rates are not going to change this year. The General Township Purposes tax mill is 3.25; .54 tax mills is for the Capital Improvements which the Township uses for debt services and .49 tax mills is for Fire Protection and that .49 mills goes directly to the Fire Department to offset their budget.

Ms. McClain explained that the decrease in revenues from 2024 is due to the fact that we are not going to have interfund operating transfers because we are 60% done with the Shireman Park. The remaining revenues have stayed the same overall for 2025. There is \$480,000 that is in the 2025 budget in the recreation development fund which is fund 49 that will cover the remaining cost for the Shireman tract. In that same fund there is \$180,000 budgeted for upgrading playground equipment in other Township owned parks. As Commissioner Davies stated, The Township had to spend all the money by December 31, 2024, which we have met for the ARPA Fund so there are no problems with the Federal government.

Ms. McClain showed a chart with employee count for what was budgeted in 2024, what is current and what is in the 2025 budget. There is an added position in the Administration for the 2025 budget for a receptionist. No changes in the codes, planning & zoning. The police department currently has 14 employees, which consists of the police chief, administrative assistant, 4 sergeants, 8 officers; for 2025 we budgeted for 17 total employees which will give us 3 more officers. The public works department was budgeted for 10 employees for 2024, we currently have 9, so we are short 1 in that department and the Stormwater and wastewater department will remain the same.

Budgeted expenditures will basically be the same, except for culture and recreation decreased by 93.97% which most of that 2 million dollars was the 1.9 million dollars we had budgeted for the Shireman tract for 2024 and there is no interfund operating transfers because the Township in 2024 took money from the reserves and put into the capital fund and the recreational development fund for future use which we didn't do for 2025. Public safety is the biggest piece of the expenditures, but that is not all police related, it also includes the fire department, which the Township is starting to pay for all of the maintenance on the

physical fire station building in 2025 which is something new in the budget. Public safety also includes EMA and the EMS contract with Penn State. The second biggest part of the expenditure is the public works department at 25%.

Ms. McClain explained that the Township transfers monies from the capital fund into the general fund to pay our debt service payments, which in 2025 we will be transferring \$493,259. These payments are for our telephone contract, our Dauphin County infrastructure bank loan of 2017 and we have a 2016 bond. The last payment on the DCIB 2015 loan will happen in December 2024. 2025 Capital purchases are: HVAC repairs-the remaining \$20,000 for the Administrative Building and \$15,000 for the Fire Station; Server and network infrastructure upgrades-\$76,113; The Board has previously approved the dump truck and accessories for the public works department-\$277,000; Pickup truck for public works, which would include everything for winter maintenance-\$170,000; Repairs to the Rosedale bridge-\$180,000; and Fiddlers Elbow Culvert- \$486,100, this is not the total cost of the culvert, the remaining funds in the DCIB 2017 will also be used for this project, which those remaining funds are about \$413,000. Ms. McClain noted that this is the first time in the budget that you will see road projects that we are paying for with general fund dollars and not taking out debt to pay because of our reserve balance that we have. The budget that we are presenting for 2025 is balanced at \$8,281,016.

BOARD COMMENTS:

Commissioner DeHart inquired about the parking tax revenue and asked if we have ever done an audit on that to figure out if we are receiving the correct amount. Ms. McClain indicated that we have not, the amount we get comes directly from the school district.

Vice President Truntz asked if Mr. Washinger could explain the type of pickup truck that the public works department is looking at purchasing for \$170,000. Mr. Washinger explained that it will be a one-ton dual body truck with accessories (plow, salt spreader, etc.). Commissioner Paul asked how old the truck is we are replacing, Mr. Washinger indicated it is from 90's.

Commissioner DeHart commented, since we are using funds out of the general fund to do some projects this year which is the first time we are doing this in a long time, he was wondering if these projects need to be done or can they be pushed back a year. The Rosedale project for example, there might be some growth down the road, would it be to our advantage to push that back a year and include it in some other project. Mr. Fabian indicated that they did get a response back from PA DEP on the permit for the Rosedale Avenue repair, because we have to rip rap the one side that is being repaired it is reducing the amount of flow going through so they are going to force us instead of a general permit to do a joint permit which generally takes 9 to 12 months to get. Due to the permitting timeline, we might be forced into a longer timeline for that project anyways. Commissioner Davies inquired who the other entity would be with the joint permit. Mr.

Fabian responded it is the US Army Corps of Engineers. Commissioner Paul asked what this will do to the cost of the project. Mr. Fabian indicated that most of the efforts have already been performed, the main difference between the general permit we pulled together, and the joint permit is an environmental assessment which is about a week or so worth of work to pull the added information, so an estimated amount would be an additional \$8,000. Commissioner Davies asked since there may be participation from the Corp, does that mean the Corp might share some financial burden. Mr. Fabian indicated that they do have some programs that you can opt into for certain types of projects, but nothing that he is aware of for this project.

Vice President Truntz noted that we spoke about some expense for vehicles, like replacing a pickup from the 90's, we have a dump truck with over 200,000 miles on it from the 80's, he just wanted to mention how much Roger Mason has saved the Township, he is a master mechanic and a great general fabricator, his skill set has really been able to extend the life of the equipment, but unfortunately there is a time when it needs to be replaced.

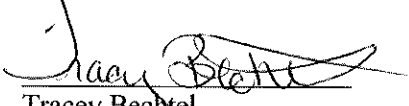
Commissioner Davies commented that since we are now accepting financial responsibility for maintenance at the fire department facility, he was wondering what all that entails. Mr. Washinger indicated that for now it is the overhead door contract, the air conditioning system and minor maintenance, he indicated he will have a better feel for things after this first year.

PUBLIC COMMENTS: None

ADJOURN:

Hearing no other comments, a motion was made by Commissioner Davies, seconded by Commissioner Paul, to adjourn the Special Meeting. The motion was unanimously approved, and the meeting adjourned at 6:52 P.M.

ATTEST:


Tracey Bechtel
Township Secretary