

**LOWER PROVIDENCE TOWNSHIP
BOARD OF SUPERVISORS BUDGET WORKSHOP
OCTOBER 13, 2022**

Attendance:

- a. The following were in attendance: Supervisors Gary Neights, Cara Coless, Janine Darby, Peter MacFarland, and Jason Sorgini; Township Manager E.J. Mentry; Accounting Manager Susan Law; and Community Relations Coordinator Denise Walsh.
- b. The workshop convened at 4:40 p.m.

1. Chair Remarks

- a) Chairman Neights gave an overview of the agenda and the procedure that would be followed for the workshop.

2. Lower Providence Community Library Budget Discussion

- b) Tejal Mehta, vice president of the Library Board of Trustees, Ben Simkin, Board treasurer, and Marija Skoog, library director, presented the library's proposed 2023 budget.
- c) Prior library budgets have included a contribution from the Township that was used for a building loan debt repayment. While the loan has been satisfied, the library's proposed 2023 budget retains the contribution.
 - i) The library representatives explained that the library receives state funding based on level of service. The Lower Providence Community Library has achieved an "excellence" level. They stated that the Township contribution is critical to keep the library functioning at this high level and loss of the contribution could result in a reduction of state aid.
 - ii) Ms. Mehta said the contribution would allow the library to make long-delayed adjustments for staff, including increased salaries and benefits.

3. Lower Providence Fire Department Budget Request

- a) Mr. Mentry reviewed the budget request provided by the fire department, notably a \$50,000 increase for operations and approximately \$250,000 for staffing.
 - i) The request reflects the LPFD's 15-year plan which includes implementation of an in-station night and weekend staffing program and an at-home night and weekend program that has already begun.
 - ii) There was discussion about maintaining financial oversight due to the increased funding.

4) Lower Providence Emergency Medical Services Budget Request

- a) Mr. Mentry said EMS is requesting an increase in the Township's contribution from \$50,000 to \$100,000. It was noted that the Township's general contribution has remained unchanged since 1999.
 - i) Additionally, at the time of the new EMS building project, a \$17,000 yearly allocation was added by the Township to cover the cost of soil remediation discovered during construction. This additional contribution is scheduled to expire in 2024.
 - ii) The Board agreed to increase total EMS funding to \$100,000 and may consider additional American Rescue Plan (ARPA) allocations in 2023.

5) Operating Budget Review/Revisions

- a) Mr. Mentry noted that the healthcare renewals had come in less than anticipated.
- b) The fee schedule changes were outlined, specifically increases in permit fees and Parks & Recreation fees.

- c) There was discussion regarding the proposed staffing changes, including requested additional full and part-time positions. The Board directed Mr. Mentry to keep all staffing additions in the preliminary budget except for the new police officer and the full-time Parks and Recreation Coordinator, but to increase the part-time wages for Parks and Recreation.

6) Capital Budget Review/Revisions

- a) Mr. Mentry reviewed the updated 2023 Capital Budget requests from all departments, including the projects and equipment that have been earmarked for ARPA expenditure.
- b) There was discussion regarding the Parks and Recreation capital projects, with some changes made to specific projects but not to the overall project budget. The Board agreed with the ARPA projects as proposed.

7) Deficit Reduction Options

- a) Mr. Mentry reviewed the current projected deficit of \$1,191,685, and provided an overview of deficit reduction options including expense reductions, fund balance utilization, and tax increases.
- b) There was a discussion of the various tax rates and several options for incremental increases. The Board directed Mr. Mentry to update the tax increase options once the changes to the budget have been made.

8) Next Steps

- a) Mr. Mentry will send the updated budget and deficit reduction options to the Board in advance of the next Board meeting.
- b) Adjournment – The budget workshop was adjourned at 8:30 PM. The Board will consider preliminary approval of the budget and authorization to advertise at its November 3, 2022 regular business meeting.

Respectfully submitted:

E.J. Mentry, Secretary