

**LOWER PROVIDENCE TOWNSHIP  
BOARD OF SUPERVISORS 2021 BUDGET WORKSHOP  
OCTOBER 5, 2021**

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**Attendance:**

- a. The following were in attendance: Supervisors Peter MacFarland, Colleen Eckman, Cara Coless, Gary Neights, and Jason Sorgini; Gregg Schuster, Interim Township Manager; Geri Spotts, Assistant Township Manager; Mike Mrozinski, Community Development Director, Joseph Chillano, Interim Public Works Director; Susan Law, Accounting Manager; Michael Jackson, Chief of Police; Jane Delaney, Parks & Recreation Director; Bill Roth, Special Projects and Technology Director, and Denise Walsh, Community Relations Coordinator.
- b. The workshop convened at 4:35 p.m.

**1. Budget Discussion**

**A) 2022 Proposed Budget Overview**

- i) Mr. Schuster presented an overview of the major cost drivers and issues for the Board's consideration through the budget process.
  - (1) A budgeted shortfall in the General Fund continues to be driven by salary, pension and benefit costs that are outpacing revenue growth. The depletion of the Unrestricted Capital Reserve Fund has shifted the burden of funding capital projects to the General Fund.
  - (2) Township finances are on solid footing, but action is required to eliminate the growing structural deficit and to prevent the depletion of the General Fund balance in the coming years.
    - (a) Pension fund and post-retirement healthcare are stable.
    - (b) Stormwater will need more funding.
    - (c) Future opportunities exist to repurpose debt service and/or library millage.
    - (d) A prior tax increase, while helpful, was insufficient to address structural deficit challenge
  - (3) Formulation of a strategic/financial plan outside the budget process is recommended.

**B) Parks and Recreation**

- i) Department Director Jane Delaney noted that the department continued to be affected by the pandemic, with some programs and events cancelled in the first half of 2021 and the modification of the summer camp program. Capital expenditures submitted in the 2021 budget have also been affected; those not completed will be moved to 2022. Mrs. Delaney said that sponsorships had also been affected but are improving.
  - (1) It was noted that event sponsors are always welcome.
  - (2) Mrs. Delaney said she is planning and hoping for a return to pre-pandemic programming and events in 2022.
- ii) The 2022 expenditures and revenues will mirror the 2021 budget with the exception of the recommendation to contract out mowing in 2022.

**C) Public Works**

- i) Interim Director Joe Chillano outlined his proposed 2022 Capital Projects, Road Reconstruction plan and 2022 Operating Budget.
- ii) Mr. Chillano spoke to the recommendation to contract out mowing. He noted that by contracting out the work, the hours spent mowing by skilled and well-compensated Public Works / Parks employees could be assigned to critical maintenance tasks.

- (1) It was noted that equipment was purchased last year when the Public Works Department took on the mowing.
- iii) Public Works capital requests for 2022 are: An F550 crew cab dump truck to replace a 2005 truck with 175,000 miles; gunite work to extend the life of the storm sewer system; and a Bonnell plow to replace an older, unreliable plow.
- iv) Mr. Chillano said the department would like to continue with the road improvement plan.
  - (1) The schedule will be coordinated with work being done by the Sewer Authority. The department continues to use a road rating system to determine the roads most in need of repair.
- v) In addition to the mowing contract, the proposed operating budget includes semi-annual bridge inspections.
- D) Community Development
  - i) Department Director Mike Mrozinski said the department saw much more activity than anticipated last year, noting a significant increase in revenue from residential permitting and several land development projects. He said he does not anticipate the same revenue in 2022.
  - ii) Mr. Mrozinski listed 2022 new construction projects known at this point. They include: Moscariello at Crosskeys; 2 units at Enclaves; Woodland Ave. subdivision (6 units); 1 unit at Creekview Estates; 2 units at Crawford Estates; 15 Woodlyn Ave. office space; and Salters rebuild.
    - (1) It was noted that with the Township getting built-out, the department workload is shifting away from activity that generates revenue and that strategic planning will be important moving forward.
  - iii) In response to a question, Mr. Mrozinski said the new Traisr geographic information system has been very helpful especially when the department must work remotely. He said there are more features that can be brought online in the future.
- E) Special Projects and Technology
  - i) Department Director Bill Roth presented his 2022 Operational Budget and Capital Budget requests.
  - ii) Mr. Roth highlighted the differences in his Operational Budget from 2021:
    - (1) There are additional support costs for two new Police programs, Cell Hawk and TLO.
      - (a) It was explained that Cell Hawk is a cell phone mapping program done in coordination with a search warrant. The other program is a data search tool.
    - (2) He noted that the maintenance and support cost include the Traisr system, Cloud storage, email hosting and Office 360.
    - (3) Mr. Roth said that there is a \$300 per month Zoom fee and a \$695 per meeting video fee for Board of Supervisors meetings.
  - iii) Mr. Roth reviewed his capital budget requests which include scheduled computer replacement (seven laptops, six PCs, two iPads), digital evidence storage, and two network printers.
- F) Human Resources
  - i) Assistant Township Manager Geri Spotts presented an overview of the 2022 Insurance, Compensation, and Pension Funding. She said the health insurance renewal rates are not yet known, but the proposed budget projects a 10% premium increase. The rates are anticipated from Delaware Valley Health Insurance Trust at the end of the month.

- ii) Estimated 2022 wage increases include an AFSCME collective bargaining agreement increase of 3%, Police collective bargaining agreement increase of 4% and potential non-union increase of 3%.

G) Police

- i) Chief Jackson presented the Police Department 2022 capital and personnel requests. He outlined the 2022 Operating Budget.
- ii) Capital requests include purchase of three police patrol vehicles under the replacement schedule; firearms/holster replacement; body worn cameras, and second payment toward Tasers purchased in 2021.
  - (1) Chief Jackson said that grant funding is possible for the firearms and body cameras.
- iii) Personnel requests include a salary increase for the executive assistance who will be taking over reaccreditation duties when the contract with an outside consultant expires and a request for an increase in hours for the Evidence Custodian.
- iv) Proposed increases include the Uniform and Clothing budget to equip two new officers who are replacing two officers currently in the DROP program, and Ammunition and Supplies to cover the cost of BolaWrap© cartridges. Chief Jackson explained that BolaWrap© is a new, less lethal piece of equipment.

H) General Discussion

- i) Mr. Schuster said discussion of the revenue-expenditure gap will continue at a second meeting to be scheduled.
- I) Adjournment – Supervisor Sorgini made a motion to adjourn. Supervisors Coless seconded the motion. The motion *passed* 4-0. (Supervisor Neights had left the workshop).

**Respectfully submitted:**

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**Geraldine Spotts, Secretary**