

**LOWER PROVIDENCE TOWNSHIP
BOARD OF SUPERVISORS 2020 BUDGET WORKSHOP
SEPTEMBER 23, 2019**

Attendance:

- a. The following were in attendance: Supervisors Peter MacFarland, Colleen Eckman, Patrick Duffy, Gary Neights and Jason Sorgini. Also in attendance were: Donald Delamater, Township Manager; Geri Golas, Assistant Township Manager; Mike Mrozinski, Community Development Director, John Primus, 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 meeting convened at 4:30 p.m. with the Pledge of Allegiance.
- c. Chairman MacFarland noted this was a workshop to have a conversation with department heads regarding their requests for the 2020 preliminary budget. Any public questions could be made during courtesy of the floor.

1. Budget Discussion

A) Public Works

- i) Department Director John Primus outlined his proposed 2020 Capital Projects, 5-Year Road Reconstruction Plan and 2020 Operating Budget. He noted that his biggest concern was the age of the trucks in the Public Works fleet, noting there was a period from between 2002 and 2012 when no trucks were purchased.
- ii) Capital requests for 2020 include a large dump truck, with plow and spreader, and gunite work to repair aging stormwater pipes. He said the new truck would replace a truck that is 26 years old and becoming difficult to repair.
- iii) The 5-Year Capital Plan includes gunite work each year, and purchase of a small dump truck, snow plow and spreader in 2022 and a front-end loader in 2024.
- iv) Supervisor Duffy asked if the larger trucks require diesel and there was discussion about the use of alternative fuels. Mr. Primus said he had researched alternative fuels but that because of the lack of compressed natural (CNG) gas fueling stations and the significant investment needed for required fit-out for CNG, it is not cost-effective at this point.
- v) Mr. Primus reviewed the proposed 2020 road improvement schedule, saying that it was on par with what had been done in the recent past. In 2020, however, the Sewer Authority would not be replacing any pipe and therefore would not be paving any roads. The Township has been paving 2 to 3 miles of roadway per year. The amount of roadway to be included in any year will depend on the bids and weather-related damage.
 - (1) In response to a question from Supervisor Neights, Mr. Primus said that the lifespan of a roadway is generally 15- to 25 years but could be longer or shorter dependent on use and weather.
 - (2) Supervisor Sorgini noted that having a road improvement plan in place has made a difference in keeping up with maintenance. Chairman MacFarland said that the Township needs to keep up the investment pace in order to not fall behind.
- vi) Mr. Primus said the Operating Budget included a new security door in the lobby area of the Administration Building (piggybacking on a police grant); a new scanner for the mechanics' use on police cars; and an increase in the equipment rental contract for plow personnel.

B) Community Development

- i) Department Director Mike Mrozinski presented his 2020 capital request: A new GIS system. He said that after researching available systems, the department prefers Traisr offered by McMahon Associates. There is a one-time fee and annual fees. The system would allow mapping and research functions not currently available.
 - (1) Supervisor Sorgini suggested that the one-time \$18,000 data migration cost might be able to be spread out. Mr. Mrozinski believes this could be possible.
 - (2) There was discussion about cost to input past data into the system, entering data moving forward and training for the system.
 - (3) Supervisor Neights asked if using Traisr would allow the Township to retire other systems. Mr. Mrozinski said it includes permitting but the financial system is not fully developed.
 - (4) Chairman MacFarland summarized that the system offers a better work project with marginal savings.
- ii) Mr. Mrozinski talked about revenues, expenses, and development trends, noting that in 2018 there was more land development and in 2019 more building permitting as projects moved through the process.
 - (1) Supervisor Neights asked about the projected 2019 electrical revenue. Mr. Mrozinski explained that higher amount was the result of more complex construction.
- iii) Mr. Mrozinski listed 2020 revenue expected based on the new construction projects known at this point.
- iv) He said the department's largest expense was contracted services for the inspectors. He said that the building inspector has been able to handle the workload, even with big projects such as Lidl, the Tru Hotel and Providence Place.
 - (1) Supervisor Sorgini asked about the status of the contract with the Montgomery County Planning Commission. The Township is in the first year of the three-year agreement.
- v) In discussing future revenue generators, Mr. Mrozinski said he would like to break-out an accessibility permit as the department is already completing inspections for this.
 - (1) There was discussion about road opening permits and the possibility of a nominal fee or no fee for replacement of a small amount of sidewalk.

C) Special Projects and Technology

- i) Department Director Bill Roth presented his 2020 Operational Budget requests and Capital Budget requests.
- ii) Mr. Roth noted that the decrease in his operational budget for 2020 reflects the removal of the economic development consultant and said the only new item of significance is the annual cost for Montgomery County's Alias system, the replacement RMS system for police.
 - (1) In response to a question from Supervisor Sorgini, Chief Jackson said the system is working well.
- iii) Mr. Roth reviewed his 5-year capital project projection which includes normal computer replacements and a new Public Works tablet with diagnostics. It was clarified that this differs from the scanner requested by Mr. Primus.
 - (1) There was discussion about delaying or moving up some replacements for a more consistent budget item.

D) Parks and Recreation

- i) Mrs. Delaney outlined the proposed 2020 Capital Projects which include: Update of the Open Space Plan; parking lot improvements at ARA fields; fence repairs/replacement for all parks and basins; and installation of water fountains at all parks.
- ii) She reviewed the proposed changes to the summer camp program: Camp Perkiomy will increase from 230 to 240 campers (120 at both Woodland and Eagleville Elementary Schools); Perkiomy Trailblazers will increase to 120 campers all at Arrowhead Elementary; Lil Perkiomy will remain at 45 campers and the fee will be raised because of the number of staff required as a state certified program, and wages for counselors will increase to help retain existing staff.
 - (1) Chairman MacFarland asked Mrs. Delaney for her impression of the camp program as she is new to the Township. She said she was impressed with the program offerings and the field trips provided.
 - (2) Supervisor Neights asked about the possibility of exercise stations in the parks. Mrs. Delaney will look into it.
- iii) There was a discussion of the Parks and Recreation operating budget. Mrs. Delaney said the changes to July 4th event (DJ, lawn games, food trucks, dunk tank) were well received and using a DJ was cost-effective. She listed several new programs that have been introduced or are planned.
 - (1) It was noted that sponsorship and lack of indoor space for programs remain challenges.
 - (2) Supervisor Duffy suggested exploring ways to give sponsors more for their money and Chairman MacFarland suggested offering sponsorship on an annual basis, rather than per program, and looking into more programming for seniors.

E) Police

- i) Chief Jackson presented the Police Department 2020 Capital and Personnel requests. He outlined the 2020 Operating Budget.
- ii) Capital requests include replacement of three police vehicles, with one of those vehicles being a new Ford Utility Body (SUV) hybrid; lease buyout for a detective unit vehicle, and the final installment for the radio upgrade.
 - (1) There was discussion about the additional cost for a hybrid and the plan if the hybrid is not suitable for police work. Supervisor Eckman suggested looking into available rebates for the hybrid purchase.
 - (2) Chief Jackson noted that on average vehicles are in service in the Police Department for 5 years.
- iii) Chief Jackson requests an additional police officer to bring staffing to 32 officers. He noted that there are four officers currently in DROP. He said the Township is lower than the average in southeast PA for officers per 1,000 residents and that the Township is in the top 10 in population, but the lowest in personnel. He said the additional officer would allow an officer to move to the Community Oriented Policing Division and outlined what additional benefits could be accomplished by the division.
- iv) He presented notable areas of operating budget increases in 2020 including: K9 budget; uniforms; contracted services (for accreditation support), and a stationary License Plate Reader at Egypt and Trooper Road (shared cost with West Norriton Township).
- v) Chief Jackson reviewed his 5-Year Capital Plan. Items on a 5-year replacement schedule, starting in 2021, include mobile data computers and tasers.

F) Human Resources

- i) Assistant Township Manager Geri Golas presented an overview of the 2020 Insurance, Compensation, and Pension Funding. She said that health insurance renewal rates are not yet known, but the increase in wages and benefits is significant. The estimated 7.5% premium increase is based on the 2019 premium increase and employee census changes.
- ii) Ms. Golas said the estimated premium increase for Workers Compensation insurance is 6%; a portion of this is now funded by the Emergency Services Tax.
- iii) Per the current collective bargaining agreements, wages for AFSCME are at 3% and 4% for police.
- iv) The estimated property, liability and auto/equipment insurance premium reflects a 3% increase from 2019.

G) Administration and Finance

- i) Mr. Delamater addressed the overall budget, noting a \$300,000 deficit and the need to cut costs or raise revenue.
- ii) Chairman MacFarland said that the Township's budget will continue to be impacted annually by rising benefits and wages and flat real estate and earned income tax revenue. He said it's a challenge requiring a long-term solution.
- iii) Supervisor Neights requested that the budget include purchase of renewable, green power and electric charging stations.
 - (1) Mr. Delamater said that an analysis of green power is under way and the charging stations would be researched.

2) Courtesy of the Floor

- A) There was no public comment.

3) Adjournment – 8:00 p.m.

Respectfully submitted:

Donald Delamater, Secretary