

**LOWER PROVIDENCE TOWNSHIP
BOARD OF SUPERVISORS 2020 BUDGET WORKSHOP
SEPTEMBER 29, 2020**

Attendance:

- a. The following were in attendance: Supervisors Jason Sorgini, Colleen Eckman, Cara Coless, Peter MacFarland, and Gary Neights. 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 workshop convened at 4:35 p.m.

1. Budget Discussion

A) Parks and Recreation

- i) Department Director Jane Delaney noted that the department had been greatly affected by the COVID-19 pandemic with programs, events and summer camp, the department's largest source of revenue, being cancelled. She said that as of February two of the camps had already been filled; the department issued 373 refunds. In addition, she noted that sponsors reduced the amount of their donations.
- ii) She said that throughout the pandemic, the Township's park trails have remained opened and have been heavily utilized. With the move to the Green Phase, the playgrounds, ballfields, basketball courts and restrooms were opened. Mrs. Delaney said that since moving to the Green Phase, the department has tried to plan programs able to adhere to COVID restrictions such as Boot Camp for Kids, Pumpkin Painting Palooza and a series with the Montgomery County Office Senior Services. She said the annual Tree Lighting is scheduled with modifications.
- iii) Because the pandemic continues to make projections difficult, she said her 2021 budget is a mirror image of the approved 2020 budget.
 - (1) Mrs. Delaney said she is planning and hoping for a return to usual programming and events next year. Should that not happen, the risk would be the same as 2020.
- iv) She outlined the 2021 capital projects which include: Parks, Recreation and Open Space Plan update; playground safety surfacing for all parks; spray pole replacement at Eagleville Park; and Hoy Park fishing pier repairs.
- v) There was discussion regarding youth sports groups and the capital improvements they make to the facilities they use.

B) Public Works

- i) Department Director John Primus outlined his proposed 2021 Capital Projects, 5-Year Road Reconstruction Plan and 2021 Operating Budget.
- ii) The capital request for 2021 is gunite work to repair aging stormwater pipes.
- iii) The 5-Year Capital Plan includes gunite work each year; purchase of a small dump truck, snow plow and spreader in 2022, and a front-end loader in 2024.
- iv) Mr. Primus reviewed the proposed 2021 road improvement schedule.

- (1) In response to a question from Supervisor Neights, Mr. Primus said the schedule is based on a road rating system. The system allows the Township to pave roads before they deteriorate too far and require major work.
 - (2) It was noted that the paving is largely dependent on gas tax (liquid fuels) funds and that a drop in those funds is anticipated with less driving being done and electric/ hybrid vehicle use.
 - (3) Roads proposed for 2021 are: Sunnyside Ave. (Fifth St. to Ridge Pike); Fourth St. (Sunnyside to Hillside Ave.); Van Buren Ave. (Rittenhouse to Trooper Rd.); Redtail Rd. (Eagleville to Highley Rd.); Glenwood Ave.; Hollywood Av.; Vine St.; and Lauman Ave. (Belmont to Woodland Av.)
 - v) Mr. Primus said the 2021 operating budget includes slight increases in vehicle maintenance software, shop tools, janitorial supplies and snow equipment rental.
- C) Community Development
- i) Department Director Mike Mrozinski said the department has remained busy throughout the pandemic and revenues for 2020 are running close to what was budgeted. He noted that the Township is getting built-out and there will likely be a decrease in revenue generated by land development.
 - ii) Mr. Mrozinski listed 2021 revenue expected based on new construction projects known at this point. They include: Courts at Brynwood; Moscariello at Crosskeys; Arrowhead Elementary School; Eagleville Elementary School; Enclave at Providence; 6-unit Woodland Avenue subdivision; Creekview Estates; Salters rebuild; Crawford Estates; and 14 Woodlyn Avenue office space.
 - iii) He said the department's expenses for 2021 maintain the status quo. The department has three fulltime and two parttime employees and one contract worker.
 - (1) In response to a question, Mr. Mrozinski said the new Traisr GIS system had been helpful when the department was working remotely. He said it has helped with efficiency and tracking responses to service requests. He hopes to utilize the system's mapping, planning and analytics in the future.
- D) Special Projects and Technology
- i) Department Director Bill Roth presented his 2021 Operational Budget and Capital Budget requests.
 - ii) Mr. Roth highlighted the differences his Operational Budget from 2020:
 - (1) The Economic Development costs have been decreased because much of what the funds had been earmarked for, such as expenses related to the annual Open House, are able to be done at no cost.
 - (2) There is additional expense due to the switch to the Traisr system.
 - (3) He noted that the contracted services for recording the Board of Supervisors meeting anticipated half of the year's meetings to remain the live/virtual hybrid model currently being used.
 - iii) Mr. Roth reviewed his capital budget requests which includes standard computer replacement (two laptops, four PCs, two iPads) and a WIFI access point.
- E) Human Resources
- i) Assistant Township Manager Geri Spotts presented an overview of the 2021 Insurance, Compensation, and Pension Funding. She said that pension and insurance expenditures have remained steady the last few years, while employee benefits costs have increased. She said

the health insurance renewal rates are not yet known, but the current budget projects an 8.5% premium increase.

- ii) The Township currently has 60 fulltime employees and one parttime employee. Estimated 2021 wage increases include AFSCME collective bargaining agreement increase of 2.5%, Police collective bargaining agreement increase of 4% and potential non-union increase of 2.5 %. This represents an increase of \$154,425.
- iii) Ms. Spotts said that pension funding is holding steady.
- iv) Mr. Delamater noted that the Township is a member of the Delaware Valley Insurance Trusts and specifically the liability trust is offering rate relief for all of its members in response to the pandemic and uncertain revenues.

F) Police

- i) Chief Jackson presented the Police Department 2021 capital and personnel requests. He outlined the 2021 Operating Budget.
- ii) Capital requests include replacement of three police vehicles (two patrol and one admin hybrid vehicle); lease payment for two unmarked vehicles; replacement of Mobile Data Computers; and replacement of Tasers.
 - (1) Chief Jackson said the hybrid vehicle would replace the lieutenant's vehicle which would be moved to the Public Works Department. This would allow a PW pickup truck to be used as a fleet vehicle. Acceleration and interior room of the new hybrid vehicle will be evaluated for use as a patrol vehicle.
 - (2) There was discussion regarding the in-car Mobile Data Computers. Chief Jackson said there has been many problems with the current computers and they are now out of warranty. The proposed mobile computers are designed specifically for police use. The chief confirmed that the computers are fixed in the vehicles.
 - (3) There was discussion about whether to pay for all 30 Tasers in 2021 or spread the payments over five years.
- iii) Chief Jackson's 2021 budget proposes ending the K-9 Unit. He said the dogs are aging and experiencing health issues, training takes the K-9 officers away from their squads twice a month, and the benefit is not there. If there is a need, the Township can request a K-9 Unit from surrounding municipalities.
- iv) Proposed budget increases include uniforms, ammunition and operating supplies. The budget includes a new police officer to replace an officer who will be retiring in early 2021. In addition, Chief Jackson requested one additional officer be hire to bring the total to 32 officers in the department.

G) General Discussion

- i) Following the department head presentations, there was discussion by the board members regarding the Township's revenue sources and the shortfalls in the General Fund and Capital Projects Fund.

Respectfully submitted:

Donald Delamater, Secretary