

UPPER MERION TOWNSHIP BOARD OF SUPERVISORS  
BUDGET WORKSHOP MEETING  
NOVEMBER 7, 2012

The Board of Supervisors of Upper Merion Township met for a Budget Workshop Meeting on Wednesday, November 7, 2012, in the Township Building. The meeting was called to order at 7:00 p.m., followed by a pledge to the flag.

ROLL CALL:

Supervisors present were: Greg Philips, Greg Waks, Bill Jenaway and Carole Kenney. Also present were: Dave Kraynik, Township Manager Designee; Judith A. Vicchio, Assistant Township Manager; Nick Hiriak, Director of Finance, John Waters, Director Safety and Codes; Karl Helicher, Library Director; Tom Nolan, Chief of Police. Supervisor Erika Spott was absent.

DISCUSSIONS:

FIRE AND RESCUE SERVICES OPERATING BUDGET

John Waters, Fire Marshal and Director of Safety and Codes, provided an overview of the township's Fire Operating budget. Highlights as follows:

- fuel increase of \$2,000 based on current fuel usage
- fire companies asking for a 4.5% increase of \$18,922
- decrease in Fireman's Relief Fund.
- no change in hydrant maintenance

Mr. Jenaway commented at the last Fire and Rescue Services Board there was a discussion about the potential to change the Relief Association process so that the Relief Association would become a function of the Fire and Rescue Services Board. In this way, monies would be more directly related to actual spending needs and payment of expenses could be handled through the Finance Director's network. These changes would require a change in the Fire and Rescue Services Board ordinance and would also require a change in the by-laws of the Relief Association.

Mr. Kraynik stated when the Fire and Rescue Services Board is ready to consider this as a recommendation to the Board of Supervisors, both he and the Finance Director will meet with the Fire Board to discuss further.

Mr. Jenaway indicated it would take at least a year to review the issues before coming back with a recommendation.

FIRE AND RESCUE SERVICES CAPITAL BUDGET

Pam Forster, Deputy Chief of Lafayette Ambulance and Chairman of the Fire and Rescue Services Board, reviewed the Capital Budget. She indicated one of the goals of the Fire Board this year was to develop and adopt the Strategic Plan and included in the Strategic Plan is a 20-year apparatus replacement schedule. If continuing with the current schedule the fund will run out of money; therefore, other options are being considered such as a reduction in the fleet, retaining vehicles longer, purchasing less expensive vehicles or consolidation of services. Projections were not made until it is known what is happening with the Strategic Plan.

Mr. Waks asked for clarification about the vehicles in the overall fleet. Ms. Forster responded there are some trucks “on their last legs.” She said there have been discussions for a few years about getting a one-vendor type system that is certified in apparatus replacement. The thinking was that better pricing might be obtained by doing maintenance on the trucks as a fleet rather than each individual company.

Ms. Forster discussed the radio system and while a grant application was submitted to FEMA, everything is in a holding pattern until Montgomery County makes a decision about a new radio system. Mr. Waters pointed out fire departments, police and EMS are all in that system and whatever decision the county makes will affect the Township significantly.

A discussion followed about the various uncertainties awaiting resolution on this issue.

Mr. Philips asked about the \$50,000 in the operating budget for Worker’s Compensation for Lafayette. Ms. Forster explained the procedure that was followed to pay for the insurance.

Mr. Jenaway stated there is a need to memorialize such procedures in the budget process for this department and this is something to work on for the next budget cycle.

Mr. Waters indicated he would start working on that.

With regard to apparatus that is up for replacement, Ms. Forster suggested rather than waiting until the vehicle is stripped of lights, radios, etc., the apparatus should be placed on the market while it is still functioning and in decent shape. Once the buyer is secured and ready to take delivery, the apparatus can then be stripped and sold, thereby providing a higher value for the apparatus.

Ms. Forster discussed the agreement covering ambulance calls for part of Bridgeport Borough wherein Upper Merion Township is reimbursed for the purchased vehicle and fuel so that it is not a burden to the residents of Upper Merion.

## SAFETY AND CODES OPERATING BUDGET

Mr. Waters discussed the Safety and Codes Operating Budget. Highlights are as follows:

- fees are collected to cover the entire budget
- personnel costs increased 5.39%
- discretionary costs decreased 12.12%
- fixed costs increased 10.66%; however, that includes funding back to the depreciation account
- 14.7% increase in workers compensation
- purchase codes account decreased 42.9% since codes are purchased on a three-year cycle
- telephone cost increased 37% due to fund data cards for use of inspection field staff in retrieving inspection data out in the field
- Total budget increased 1.5% without depreciation and 3.3% with depreciation included.
- IT Maintenance increased 14.5% due to field devices for inspectors.

A discussion followed about how permits are handled when projects cross over into the next year as well as how permits are handled in general.

## SAFETY AND CODES CAPITAL BUDGET

Mr. Waters discussed Safety and Codes Capital Budget. Highlights as follows:

- all capital items, with the exception of the possible wireless devices, are equipment replacement
- equipment replacement will be active in 2013 since some public works vehicles have been delayed or new purchase.

A discussion ensued about the various vehicles up for replacement. During the discussion it was mentioned that alternative energy vehicles will be considered. An added incentive is the natural gas filling station now located in King of Prussia.

## LIBRARY OPERATING BUDGET

Mr. Karl Helicher, Library Director, reviewed the Library Operating Budget. Highlights include:

- total personnel increased 3.3%
- salaried part-time professionals and part-time clerical increased 6.6%

There was a discussion about tuition reimbursement and how it is based on a percentage of the tuition from Temple, West Chester and Penn State. Also considered are the grades received for graduate and undergraduate; those

who do extremely poorly or fail are not reimbursed.

Highlights continue:

- books and materials expenses are flat
- 29% increase in Information Tech Maintenance due to reduction in McLinc computer support
- overall operating budget increased 6.6%

A discussion followed about increasing costs of e-books for libraries, McLinc fees, intra-library book loans, and furniture replacement.

### POLICE OPERATING AND CAPITAL BUDGET

Tom Nolan, Chief of Police, discussed the operating budget and recent personnel actions. Highlights are as follows:

- overall salaries decreased 7%
- Retirement Health Fund increased 4.5% and no increase in Reserve Retiree Life Insurance
- Part-time salaries covering crossing guards increased slightly from 4.5% to 4.8% due to addition of third substitute position
- Shift differential decreased almost 5%
- Tuition reimbursement increased 36%
- off duty services decreased 40%
- increase in clothing allowance
- Operating supplies increased 2.8%
- Fuel/Oil vehicles increased

A discussion followed about alternative energy vehicles, use of compressed natural gas for vehicles that remain in this area as well as availability of this fuel in certain areas when it is necessary to go out of this area.

Additional highlights:

- Uniform Budget increased
- No contribution in this year's budget for SPCA.
- No increase in petty cash
- Slight decrease in community relations

A discussion ensued about the proposed volunteer Chaplain Program, followed by a discussion about the K-9 officers.

- Professional services decreased 28%
- Telephone charges decreased
- Radio maintenance increased 4.1%
- travel/food expenses and printing and advertising retained at same rate

- slight increase in liability insurance
- Utilities - Township Building/pistol range decreased 9%
- Maintenance Contracts increased 2%
- Vehicle Maintenance increased 4.5%
- Dues/subscriptions increased 16%
- Training increased 2.8%

A discussion followed about matters associated with the indoor/outdoor pistol ranges.

Chief Nolan discussed the Capital Budget. Highlights are as follows:

- No new Communications equipment
- weapons/police equipment includes \$10,000 for miscellaneous police equipment such as surveillance equipment, incident management supplies as well as the establishment of a bicycle unit

A discussion ensued about how the bicycle unit will be utilized in community relations, followed by a discussion on furniture replacement.

- While nothing is in the budget for 2013 for replacement of communication equipment, a total of \$145,000 is budgeted for 2014.

A discussion ensued about the idea of lease/purchase with the county, followed by a discussion of police weaponry.

- No information technology equipment for replacement in 2013; just the potential to replace livescan CPIN unit in 2014 in the event a Pennsylvania Chiefs of Police grant is not available.
- Replace Miscellaneous Capital Projects - \$10,000 to replace all Township Building cameras and \$11,000 to replace video arraignment system.
- Replace Patrol Car Equipment - \$15,000 for vehicle changeovers
- Chief Nolan noted solar panels to be installed on the roof of police cars to increase the life of batteries. Two police sedans are already equipped with solar panels.
- Replacement of Mobile Data Computers starting in 2013; however, this item could potentially be pushed back a year because current warranty does not expire until November of 2013.
- Replacement Vehicle Fund - approximately 5-6 cars per year (both marked and unmarked) are replaced. There are 17 cars in Patrol Fleet, 10 cars in Investigations Fleet, 6 Special Services vehicles and 5 Command cars
- Detective cars will now be equipped with emergency lights for safety.
- Cleaning and repair of exhaust system was done this year and exhaust system/hardware repairs may not be necessary.

#### ADJOURNMENT:

There being no further business to come before the Board, the meeting was adjourned at 8:50 p.m.

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RONALD G. WAGENMANN  
SECRETARY-TREASURER/  
TOWNSHIP MANAGER

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Minutes Approved:  
Minutes Entered: