

MINUTES

SWATARA TOWNSHIP

BUDGET MEETING

OCTOBER 20, 2022

BOARD OF COMMISSIONERS

1. **Call to Order:** President Zubeck called the Budget Meeting of the Swatara Township Board of Commissioners to order at 6:02 p.m., Thursday, October 20, 2022. The meeting was held at the Swatara Township Municipal Building, 599 Eisenhower Boulevard, Harrisburg, PA.
2. **Roll Call:** Commissioners Christine Zubeck, Michael Tuckey, Jeff Varner, Shaela Ellis and Richard Boudier were present. Also present: Township Manager Jim Fosselman, and Secretary Karen Alleman.
3. **Visitors Requests and Comments:** None at this time.
4. **Discussion of Funds: Public Works:** Director Todd Webb discussed his budget with the Board.

Compost Facility: Engineering services will increase due to the elimination of the leachate pit. Maintenance of equipment was increased to \$6,000. A major equipment purchase in the amount of \$350,000 is anticipated due to a DEP Act 101, Section 902 recycling grant we will be applying for next year. Commissioner Ellis asked if the wages listed were only for seasonal help. Director Webb said they were.

Public Works General Fund: Wages are set by the collective bargaining unit. Materials and supplies were increased to be more in line with current budget numbers. Equipment rental was increased to allow for rental of a roller for in house paving. Training was increased to allow for a mechanic to take some fire apparatus repair courses. The major equipment purchase is a digital printer for the sign shop. Vehicles that are scheduled to be purchased will be taken out of the liquid fuels fund.

Commissioner Ellis asked if there was an update to the Bishop Park project. Manager Fosselman said the township is awaiting funding from the State. There is no update to this project.

Street Cleaning: The expenditure from this account will be for new curtains and gutter brooms for the street sweepers. Parts costs have gone up significantly.

Snow Removal: General expense was increased to allow for mailbox damage. A salt spreader will be purchased to fit in a pickup/small dump truck.

Traffic Signals and Signs: The only increase is for digital printer supplies.

Sidewalks: The overall cost for this fund has decreased.

The Public Works vehicles scheduled for purchase will have to be purchased in November through State Contract. If vehicles are not ordered there's a chance we will not receive any vehicles next year.

5. **Parks and Recreation:** Randy Smith discussed his budget with the Board. Wages are set by the collective bargaining unit. Additional increases to wages are for one new

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employee and a crew leader position. Materials and supplies remain the same. Recreation program expenses were increased slightly to reflect programs offered by the township such as the egg hunt, Halloween trunk or treat, Swatty Float, movie nights, etc. Engineering services could increase due to work at Taylor Park, it would all depend on a grant award. Contract services were increased due to port-a-johns at the park sites. Training expenses were eliminated during COVID and now training may resume. Building maintenance costs have increased due to the age of the structures at the parks. Maintenance and repair of equipment has been increased to reflect the cost of living. Minor equipment such as weed whackers and leaf blowers need to be replaced. A zero-turn mower needs to be replaced at a cost of around \$17,000. An enclosed trailer for equipment transport is necessary. The average life span of play equipment is 15-20 years. There are five parks right now that are within two years of twenty years. Unless the play equipment is replaced, it will have to be removed, like what happened at the 65th Street park.

President Zubeck said play equipment was in the budget last year, then removed. She asked if this was the same equipment that was removed. Mr. Smith said it was. She felt the play equipment was a priority and should have been replaced. Mr. Smith said it was upsetting. President Zubeck asked for a replacement schedule for the parks. Mr. Smith said he did just have a list made; he will provide a copy to the Board. Commissioner Varner asked if the playground equipment is on an inspection schedule. Mr. Smith said the equipment is inspected once per week.

Commissioner Ellis would like to change the way the Recreation Advisory Board works so when situations like this come up regarding equipment replacement, the Advisory Board would make recommendations to the Board. President Zubeck took the recommendation under consideration.

President Zubeck said if the piece of equipment at 65th Street park was deteriorated, it should have been replaced. If the Board felt it should have been replaced, it should have been funded, but it was removed from the budget before the final vote on the budget was taken. She received complaints from residents who were upset that the equipment was removed from the park.

Commissioner Tuckey asked if the cost of equipment was up 40% from last year. Mr. Smith said he is working with a new playground equipment representative and the \$50,000 budgeted may not be adequate due to the increase in plastic prices. There are only two companies in this area that deal with playgrounds, and one in New Jersey. Mr. Smith said part of the \$75,000 under capital outlay is for a mulch border to go around the play pieces. A lot of mulch is washed away, and the border will help to keep

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mulch in place, reducing expenses. Commissioner Tuckey suggested looking at wood borders versus plastic borders.

Commissioner Varner asked if there is any financial saving to purchase in bulk versus one piece of equipment at a time. Mr. Smith said there are savings, you would get a bulk price, plus this year's price.

Manager Fosselman suggested applying for a Dauphin County Gaming Grant to replace playground equipment.

Mr. Smith said there are currently twenty parks in use. He would like to see the parks used to their optimum.

6. **Planning, Building and Codes:** Mr. Ihlein presented his budget to the Board. There are only two items in his budget with variables which are due to the economy. Engineering services are up and there is an additional engineering service for land development plans which is for developers and is reimbursed. Mr. Ihlein would like to hire a consultant to begin the comprehensive plan next year. The Zoning Hearing Board line item is up slightly due to the number of hearings held, the Board gets a small stipend. He would like to upgrade software for the department. Inspection services are up for third party inspections but are offset by the revenue line item.

Manager Fosselman wanted to make the Board aware of the Minimum Municipal Obligations for pension plans and the retiree reimbursable health insurance. Revenues will be reviewed on Monday, October 24. He will run numbers using the current tax rates and see how that works out. The overall budget will be discussed at the October 24 meeting.

5. **Visitors Requests and Comments:**

- A. **Tom Connolly, 345 North Harrisburg Street:** He reminded the Board that Commissioner Boudier was the Chair of the Recreation Committee in 2020 and 2021. Many significant projects were completed at parks during this time period. He credited the whole Board for their work during COVID to give some normalcy during that difficult time.
President Zubeck wants to make sure that as we are moving forward, if we can't maintain what we have, then we should not look at additional projects that will take away from current resources.
- B. **Chris Fries, 3800 Brisban Street:** Asked if there were payroll adjustments for employees who are also volunteer firefighters, specifically if those employee salaries are charged against the fire fund. Manager Fosselman said it would not be feasible because the fire fund and general fund cannot co-mingle.
- C. **Gavin Ford, 3731 Rutherford Street:** Thanked the Board, he feels they are on the right track for recreation for next year.

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6. **Commissioners Requests and Comments:**

- A. **Commissioner Ellis:** Asked Mr. Smith to contact the gentleman at Living Waters Church to possibly work with him again on recreation projects. He has been very helpful. She thanked everyone for coming out this evening.
- B. **Commissioner Boudier:** Thanked staff for the work in preparing the budget.
- C. **Commissioner Tuckey:** Wanted to make sure that all suppliers are given consideration for purchases. He thanked staff for the work in preparing the budget. Thanked those in attendance for coming to the meeting.
- D. **Vice President Varner:** Nothing at this time. Thanked everyone for their presentation.
- E. **President Zubeck:** She asked if the Living Waters project was a partnership between the County and the Township and Living Waters. Former Commissioner Tom Connolly said it was. She thanked everyone for their work on the budget.

7. **Adjournment:** The meeting adjourned at 7:52 p.m.


Karen Alleman, Township Secretary