

MINUTES

SWATARA TOWNSHIP

BUDGET WORKSHOP

OCTOBER 12, 2023

BOARD OF COMMISSIONERS

1. **Call to Order:** President Zubeck called the Budget Workshop of the Swatara Township Board of Commissioners to order at 6:00 p.m., Thursday, October 12, 2023. 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, and Shaela Ellis were present. Commissioner Richard Boudier arrived at 6:03 p.m. Also present: Township Manager Jim Fosselman, Assistant Manager Kim Kaufman, Assistant Finance Director Brittany Yarzinsky, Fire Chief Michael Ibberson, and Secretary Karen Alleman.
3. **Visitors Requests and Comments:**
 - A. **Andy Moyer, 570 Margate Road:** He is a member of the Fire Services Committee and would like the Board to take into consideration the lack of volunteers and plan ahead to move forward.
 - B. **Chris Fries, 3800 Brisban Street:** He would have liked a report at the Board meeting last evening regarding fire safety week.
 - C. **Gavin Ford, 3731 Rutherford Street:** He requested an additional "Visitors Requests and Comments" be added at the end of the agenda.
4. **Discussion of Funds:**
 - A. **Fire Fund:** Chief Ibberson presented a Power Point of his budget to the Board. Chief Ibberson said the majority of fire services money comes from real estate taxes. Next year there will be a 1.5% decrease in real estate taxes. The assessed valuation of the Township dropped by \$24,750,000 plus, due mostly to PennDOT taking properties for the Route 83 improvement project. This decrease will be reflected throughout the budget. The overall revenue from real estate taxes will be down by 1.7% overall.

Health costs will increase next year by 8.1%. Mr. Ibberson is waiting for additional insurance estimates. The budget reflects a 4.9% increase to the fire budget, due mostly to inflation. There are no changes to the EMA budget.

Commissioner Tuckey asked if more than one quote was given for fire insurance. Mr. Ibberson said there are two major insurance carriers for volunteers, VFIS and Provident Insurance. They currently use VFIS because they have the best insurance for volunteers. He will check with other carriers for quotes. Commissioner Ellis would like the Power Point presentation placed on the website. Mr Fosselman said there should be a carry-over of approximately \$282,793.88 at the end of 2023.
 - B. **Debt Service:** Real estate taxes should total \$1,361,600. The expenditures from this fund are etched in stone. Funds received from real estate taxes are used to pay this fund. There is no way to cut millage on debt service. Expenses from the fund are two bond issues, totaling \$1,389,150. If the assessed valuation of the township drops, millage rates will have to be increased.

MINUTES

Commissioner Ellis asked if the recent borrowing would come from this fund, or liquid fuels. Mr. Fosselman said it would be taken from liquid fuels. The Debt Service Fund is strictly for bond payments.

- C. **Ambulance Fund**: Mr. Fosselman said millage cannot be cut in this fund. The fund should have a carryover of \$11,042 to begin 2024. President Zubeck asked why there was a \$77,000 difference between this year's total and the total two years ago. Mr. Fosselman said there was a shortage, the fund was underfunded.
- D. **Liquid Fuels Fund**: Mr. Fosselman said this fund is funded by the State. Next year the township will receive \$799,156. Anti-skid, electric for traffic signals, street lighting, 63rd Street Bridge infrastructure loan and lease of equipment is taken from this fund. There should be a carryover at the end of this year of \$372,809 to begin 2024.
- E. **OLDS Fund**: Expenditures have slowly exceeded revenues in this account. Fees may eventually have to be increased. There should be a carryover at the end of this year of \$25,637 to begin 2024.

The next budget meeting will take place on October 16 at 6:00 p.m. The police, business privilege and administration budgets will be discussed.

5. Visitors Requests and Comments:

- A. **Tom Connolly, 345 North Harrisburg Street**: He asked if there was a limit to the grant for turnout gear. Chief Ibberson said the grant only covers new firefighters as long as they get a physical. The grant is from CAPCOG and covers multiple municipalities.
- B. **Andy Moyer, 570 Margate Road**: He asked if there was a reason for the decrease in OLDS income. Mr. Fosselman said they are currently looking at that line item. He also asked for the total fire budget for 2023. Mr. Ibberson said it was \$1.9 this year, dropping to \$1.4 next year because the bond payment will be retired.
- C. **Chris Fries, 3800 Brisban Street**: Asked if the radio grant went through. Mr. Ibberson said he has not received it, nor has he received a denial letter. He asked how many years the ambulance contract was extended. Mr. Ibberson said it was just renewed two years ago. He will check and let Mr. Fries know.

6. Commissioners Requests and Comments:

- A. **Commissioner Ellis**: Thanked everyone for coming out this evening.
- B. **Commissioner Boudier**: Nothing at this time.
- C. **Commissioner Tuckey**: Thanked everyone for coming out this evening.
- D. **Vice President Varner**: Nothing at this time.


MINUTES

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- E. **President Zubeck**: She thanked everyone for coming this evening. These meetings are extremely important, and all input is important.
7. **Adjournment**: The meeting adjourned at 7:05 p.m.


Karen Alleman, Township Secretary