

MINUTES

SWATARA TOWNSHIP

BUDGET WORKSHOP

OCTOBER 23, 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., Monday, October 23, 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 6:05 p.m. Also present: Township Manager Jim Fosselman, Assistant Finance Director Brittany Yarzinsky, Director of Public Works Todd Webb, Director of Building Maintenance Facilities Brenden Orth, and Secretary Karen Alleman.
3. **Visitors Requests and Comments:**
 - A. **Shane Steele, 613 Barbara Drive:** Residents would like to see things for their children. He would like to see the summer program return for children.
4. **Discussion of Funds:**
 - A. **Public Works:** Director Webb presented his budget to the Board. There is a \$5,000 item in the compost facility engineering services because the current leachate system is going to be eliminated. There is \$350,000 designated in major equipment purchase for a front-end loader, two leaf machines and two leaf boxes. This money will only be expended if the Township receives a grant. Overtime and other pay will see an increase, which is driven by the weather. Repair costs have been increased due to the deployment of the mechanic. The township is currently down one street sweeper. We do not have a delivery time for a new sweeper, if we purchase a demo model sweeper the turnaround time could be short. Mr. Webb would like to purchase a digital printer for \$25,000 to decrease time making signs and save on the added cost of purchasing high intensity sheeting. Veolia Water has not provided a list of streets for waterline replacements in 2024 yet, but we need to be prepared to contribute when they provide the list. Mr. Webb would like to overlay some alleys utilizing township staff, for a cost of approximately \$75,000. He requested the purchase of a large dump truck for \$213,000, and a small dump truck for \$122,000. 2023-24 salt prices came in today. The Co-Stars price is \$85.38 per ton, up about \$3-4 per ton. The CAPCOG price is \$73.87 per ton, up about \$3.50 per ton. Commissioner Tuckey asked for a price on the demo street sweeper. Mr. Webb said the demo would be around \$250-260,000, depending on add-ons. A new sweeper would cost about \$360-370,000.
President Zubeck asked for a list of compost facility projects completed this year. Mr. Webb said the water and electric lines were completed, and insulation was added. A dedicated street sweeper clean out area was installed. Upgrades are made as needed for the police shooting range. Land on the north side was cleared

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to prepare for materials for the building project. A pad was installed for fire services. A roof simulator may be installed next year.

Commissioner Ellis asked what wages were included in the compost facility wages. Mr. Webb said the wages were only for the compost facility monitors. She would like to see the wages of the full-time employees included in this line item so there is a better representation of spending. Mr. Webb does have the wages and hours worked at the compost facility broken down. She asked if there were any new hires in public works. Mr. Webb said there was one new hire, with a total of twenty-five full-time employees.

- B. **Building and Grounds**: Mr. Orth presented the 2024 Building and Grounds budget to the Board. Materials and supplies for the building have been decreased. The custodial supplies line has been increased because of the loss of a custodian, and a new custodian coming on board. Mr. Orth and the custodian will take additional training next year so the township can be more self-sufficient. Mr. Orth would like to purchase a 2024 Bobcat Toolcat for building and grounds maintenance around the building and the Swatara Fire Station. He would also like to purchase an F-350 truck to plow around the building and spread salt. Both of these large items would be purchased through a lease. Minor equipment purchases include a new vacuum cleaner and a new push mower.

Commissioner Tuckey asked if the arrangement with the public works department to clear snow and ice wasn't working. Mr. Orth said the parking lot has to be kept clear for the police department. The police vehicles have to be moved in the rear parking lot and a large highway truck is not feasible to use in that area.

- C. **Parks and Recreation**: Some additional money was budgeted for summer help, additional help is needed next year. Materials and supplies have been increased due to inflation. Roofs at some of the park storage and restroom facilities need to be replaced. Recreation maintenance is asking for a zero turn mower, a trailer and a truck to haul equipment. The budget reflects a 1.7% increase.

President Zubeck said the 2021 budget was \$667,444. The current budget for this year is \$692,598. The 2024 budget is \$704,575. There was no decrease to the recreation budget. Two years ago, playground equipment was requested that had not been funded. Last year that playground equipment was funded and added to the parksite.

Commissioner Ellis spoke with Recreation Department employees Mr. Chad Huggins and Mr. Randy Smith today. They would like to add infant swings at Bressler Park and add play pieces at existing parks. Some projects were not completed this year due to injury and being short staffed. Oberlin Park has to be made ADA compliant, the walkway has to be repaired. Resurfacing of the tennis court at Vanatta needs to

be completed as well as other resurfacing. The driveway at the Crest needs to be paved. The maintenance staff would like to purchase materials for new roofing this year, for placement next year. She asked if a crew leader position would be added due to Randy doing more administrative work. She feels it would be beneficial to have a designated crew leader so people could refer to them with questions. Mr. Fosselman said it would have to be a union decision.

- D. **Planning, Building and Codes:** Mr. Ihlein presented his budget to the Board. A lot of their revenue is permit driven. The budget for last year was \$860,820. Next year's is \$895,669. Inspection services have increased for third party inspections, to \$304,000. This item also has a revenue line item that pays for this item. There are some land development plans from this year that will carry over to next year for permits. Some of the overages this year were for unforeseen legal and engineering fees. Mr. Fosselman said the estimated revenues for this year, through third party inspections is \$567,000, a twenty-eight percent increase. Mr. Ihlein suggested there is room for an increase in the commercial building permit fee.

Mr. Fosselman said Commissioners can contact him any time to add items to the budget, or request changes. He will send budget updates to the Commissioners. President Zubeck thanked all staff who participated in the budget workshops. She also welcomed Mr. DeWayne Kresge, building custodian, to the meeting.

5. **Visitors Requests and Comments:**

- A. **Shane Steele, 613 Barbara Drive:** He asked for the revenues to be presented to the public. He asked for a final price on the new municipal building.
- B. **Tom Connolly, 345 North Harrisburg Street:** He asked to see the end of the expense worksheet.
- C. **Gavin Ford, 3731 Rutherford Street:** He would like the Board to consider an additional position in Parks and Recreation, for a coordinator or worker. He feels the department is understaffed given the number of township parks. He would also like to see a larger budget for tree trimming at parks.

6. **Commissioners Requests and Comments:**

- A. **Commissioner Ellis:** Would like a timeline for the revenues. Mr. Fosselman has to contact the County for a new assessed valuation and the figures are not exact yet for the loans. Expenses for Rupp Hill Road are also not complete yet. She wanted to know if the revenues would be presented to the public before the budget was presented. She asked if the project list that was given out this evening would be presented to the public. President Zubeck said it would be presented in the future.

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- B. **Commissioner Boudier**: Nothing at this time.
- C. **Commissioner Tuckey**: Thanked the department heads for presenting their budgets. He thanked Mr. Fosselman for waiting to get all the correct information before he presented the budget.
- D. **Vice President Varner**: He thanked staff for all of their hard work on the budget.
- E. **President Zubeck**: She thanked staff for preparing their budgets. The information provided is for everyone's viewing. The revenues were introduced the same night as the budget vote was taken in a prior year. She voted no to that budget because that information was kept from her. This has been an open and transparent process for the last two years. We started 2022 with a \$200,000 deficit. Programs were underfunded. The prior administration created budget challenges. The borrowing is the prior administration. The recreation funding was the prior administration. A lot of items are a trickle down effect that didn't happen overnight. It was a collection of years that led us to this point. The increase that Commissioner Varner did not vote for was supposed to be a ten-year budget for the future. Funds were mismanaged. We have gone for more grants this year than any other year, we continue to be aggressive in acquiring grants. Some paving projects have been done in house to pay for larger paving projects. There were no cuts to recreation, things were funded that were not funded in the past. Regarding engineering fees, her first year they were \$158,000, that was a transition year. They then went up to \$350,000. In 2019 they crept up to \$600,000 and then up to \$700,000. The fees are now dropping. She thinks we have a great budget this year and will continue to do the best job possible this year. The challenges created by past choices will continue to be addressed.
7. **Adjournment**: Commissioner Tuckey made a motion to adjourn the Budget Workshop at 7:16 p.m., seconded by Commissioner Varner. Motion carried unanimously.


Karen Alleman, Township Secretary