

MINUTES

BOARD OF COMMISSIONERS

LOWER ALLEN TOWNSHIP

BUDGET MEETING

October 21, 2024

The following were in ATTENDANCE:

BOARD OF COMMISSIONERS

Dean W. Villone, President
Jennifer Caron, Vice-President
Joshua Nagy
Charles Brown
Joseph Swartz

TOWNSHIP PERSONNEL

Thomas G. Vernau, Township Manager
Rebecca Davis, Public Works Director
David Holl, Public Safety Director
Alycia Knoll, Finance Director
Isaac Sweeney, PE, Community & Economic
Development Director
Nathaniel Sterling, Administrative Secretary
Renee' Greenawalt, Recording Secretary

President Villone called the October 14, 2024 Budget Meeting of the Board of Commissioners to order at 6:00 PM. He announced that Proof of Publication for the meeting was available for review. This was followed by prayer and the Pledge of Allegiance.

ANY BUSINESS PERTINENT TO THE TOWNSHIP

President Villone noted that if anyone wished to speak at that time, there would be 10 minutes allotted per person to speak at the podium. There were none.

BUDGET INTRODUCTION

Manager Vernau explained that budgets would be presented by each of the Directors and noted that due to the transitory nature of staffing this year, the budget presentations are not uniformly structured. He added that the transition has also caused a delay in the preparation of the salary information, which will be presented at a future meeting and circulated in advance. He reported that the Board had previously given directions to apply a three percent salary increase. Mr. Vernau also noted the addition of an executive session to the agenda to discuss labor negotiations.

President Villone inquired about the availability of a presentation on a five-year plan. Mr. Vernau indicated that the information would be provided later.

Departments of Finance (402) and Tax (403)

Director Knoll presented a summary of the budgets for both Finance and Tax. She noted that for Finance, there were essentially no changes except for \$2500 for office furniture. She also noted a 12% decrease from the 2024 budget due to outsourcing billing for EMS.

President Villone asked why the Audit line item was \$0. Director Knoll stated the auditor had not yet provided a quote for services.

Next, Director Knoll reviewed the budget request for Tax. She highlighted the Tax Collector salary at \$7500 and noted no changes outside of the Commission on EIT & LST which was reduced by 11% based on actual expenditure for 2024. These are funds paid to Cumberland County Tax Bureau.

A discussion ensued about the Tax Collector salary fee and pending legislation that if passed, would allow municipalities the opportunity to not have an elected tax collector position when the position is vacant.

Department of Administration (400)

Manager Vernau presented the budget and highlighted line items with changes and reported an overall 2.7% decrease from 2024.

181 – Employee Incentives – increase of \$250 for Township shirts and a \$500 reduction due to fewer retirement expenses

220 – General Expenditures - \$200 increase refreshments at ad hoc meetings

260 – Minor Equipment – reduced to zero

318 – Other Professional Services – reduction in website design cost, due to most of the project being completed in 2024

420 – Dues and Subscriptions – Adobe Pro licenses moved from Department 407 and \$600 for SAM (System for Awards Management) registration for grants

Department of Human Resources (406)

260 Minor Equipment – reduced to zero

425 Employee Activities – Moved \$2000 from employee recognition to employee engagement to use towards holiday function in December 2025.

459 Civil Service – Increase of \$1420 due to anticipated testing and promotional costs in the police department

Department of Information Services (407)

260 – Software & Licenses – increase of \$11,620 for increases in licenses to include Cloud backup software, Microsoft 365, Endpoint Security, which is increasing by 17% or \$9,384. Mr. Vernau noted that to reduce costs, the individual user cyber security training program could be curtailed. Members noted the large increase in the Endpoint Security program cost and acknowledged the importance of cyber security. Mr. Vernau said he would consult with Third Element to determine the details of the cost increase. Additionally, Adobe Pro licenses moved to the individual departments.

312 – Service Bureau – increase in cloud storage fee of \$1260 plus new cloud printer management software for \$2700.

318 – Other Professional – 5% increase in Network Support agreement with Third Element

Department Municipal Building (409)

143 – MSC Salary F/T – Janitorial Maintenance – Adding another staff person to address facility maintenance. Consideration will be given to a hybrid position with Public Works. Preference is for full-time employees in this role.

191 – Uniforms - \$1900 for uniform service for 2 staff

231 – Gasoline – doubled based on usage from \$500 to \$1000

260 – Minor Equipment - \$1900 for a salt spreader and shed

321 – Communications - \$600 for additional cell phone

373 – Repair & Maintenance, Building - 400 % increase in software subscription for facilities and fleet maintenance. The older software subscription is no longer supported. Purchase of initial software, transfer of information and training. Fees will be reduced in future years. \$6000 for security access maintenance and hardware – cameras, card access, and \$1000 for security panic button installation

374 – Repair and Maintenance Equipment - \$4500 for pressure valve replacement due to pending failures, \$6900 garage door operator replacements – need to replace original equipment (2007)

375 – Repair & Maintenance, Grounds - \$10,000 for sidewalk replacement. This item could be postponed to another year to reduce the budget; however, it is a possible safety issue. Public Works staff could perform the labor, limiting cost to time and material.

377 – Generator Maintenance - Increase of \$2500 for maintenance contract

387 – Equipment Rental - New Item for \$3500 for aerial lifts, for maintenance on light poles, gutters, etc.

730 – Equipment & Vehicles - \$10,000 for scheduled replacement of Kyocera document center.

President Villone expressed appreciation in efforts to maintain and preserve Township resources, saving significant tax dollars for citizens.

Department Fleet Maintenance (434)

245 – Operating Supplies - \$3500 new item for synthetic transmission oil – for fire rescue vehicles

260 – Minor Equipment - \$3500 miscellaneous cordless tools – need to replace majority of cordless tools, \$3100 hydraulic hose cutter, \$2800 for parts washer – instead of using brake clean, \$8400 for shop tools

261 – Vehicle equipment - \$8000 for A/C recovery machine- newer vehicles are not compatible with the coolant fluid, \$3000 for floor jacks, drain pans, torch kit, \$600 for printer at mechanic office

397 – LA Fire Vehicle Repair - Add \$2000 for additional LAFC vehicle repairs

420 – Dues and Subscriptions - \$3000 for John Deer and JCB maintenance repair updates – scan tool

President Villone noted an anticipated increase in work with fire apparatus and expressed appreciation for the ability and initiative of staff to perform repair and maintenance work in-house.

400% increase (again) for subscription software.

Department Community Development (413)

Director Sweeney presented significant changes to the budget. He noted that most items remained the same or had slight increases from 2024. He highlighted items with significant increases.

244 – ICC Code Book & Publication - \$2500 increase

313 – Engineering & Architectural - \$45,000 increase for Zoning and SALDO revisions (\$105,000 - anticipate \$85,000 in grant funding).

314 – Legal Services - \$15,000 increase. Legal review for Zoning and SALDO revisions. Increased Solicitor usage coupled with increase in hourly rate.

316 – ZHB (Zoning Hearing Board) Legal Retainer - \$14,500 increase – Projecting 12 Dockets for 2025 (avg of \$1500 per Docket)

Departments of Public Works, Parks and Stormwater

Director Davis presented the proposed budgets and reviewed highlights for each department.

Public Works

421 Yard Waste - Overall increase of 2.60%. Increase in Rental Equipment - \$1000. She also noted a capital acquisition for a leaf turner machine for \$338,000 with a commitment of grant matching funds in the amount of \$68,000, which is a contingency purchase.

430 Highway General – Overall decrease of -4%. \$1000 increase for CDL Licensing, \$1000 increase for GIS Services, and a Capital Acquisition of a tracked skid steer for \$60,000.

433 Signals and Signs – Overall decrease of -15%. \$1500 increase in minor equipment to replace aging barricades, cones and signage. There are also two capital projects which include Rossmoyne Road RRFB and school bus flasher at a cost of \$156,000 (\$17,000 matching funds) and the Flashing Beacon at Wesley and Royal Drives for \$100,000 (\$34,000 RTP Grant).

435 Sidewalks, Crosswalks and Curbs – No change. There is a pedestrian improvement project at 18th Street and Hummel Avenue at a cost of \$90,000 (\$34,000 RTP Grant).

438 Highway and Bridge Maintenance –5% (\$2800) increase for supplies to maintain roads properly increase

440 – Highway Building – Under Minor Equipment there is a \$2000 washer/dryer replacement, and in Maintenance and Repair of Building there is \$6000 for a card access reader for Public Works office.

455 Street Trees – No increases.

Parks

452 – General Parks – Overall increase of 4%. Replacement of an iPad for \$1000, \$1000 in maintenance for replacement of benches, picnic tables, wood carpet for playground.

Capital projects include the Beacon Hill Phase I Project, Highland Park tennis court reconstruction and handicap accessibility improvements, Creekwood Park boat launch design and construction projects. Additionally, replacement of an F-550 Dump Truck.

454 – Lower Allen Community Park - \$500 increase for clothing, boots, safety gear. \$5000 increase in Engineering for a wetland assessment for pond, \$1000 increase for tree removal and \$2200 increase for the Barn Concession Stand maintenance and repair

Stormwater

414 – MS4 – Overall decrease of -17%. The Stormwater Authority Audit has a \$1000 increase and a \$1000 increase in required advertising and printing costs. Capital Acquisition Projects include the basin construction retrofits under the pollution reduction plan at the Manor at Westport and High Hotels. Costs for these projects will be offset by a clean water grant.

431 – Street Sweeping – No increases.

436 – Storm sewers and Drains - \$5000 increase in materials costs for stormwater infrastructure replacement at Appleton and \$17,000 increase in engineering and design for Seneca pump.

President Villone asked whether the current fee structure was sufficient to fund the needs. Director Davis noted that the fees and grants cover the projects, however the fee could necessitate reevaluation when the new requirements are issued by the Department of Environmental Protection.

President Villone expressed appreciation for the preparation of the budget information. He noted that future budget discussions would be held at a regular meeting, likely the second meeting in November.

Commissioner Nagy noted that several budgets were over the threshold requirements and asked about the process of modifying them to within acceptable levels. Mr. Vernau said that salary information would be incorporated into the budget, followed by revenues and then staff will conduct further evaluation of what items could be reduced. He indicated that information would be provided to members of the Board on a weekly basis. The budget must be on the table for public review for 20 days prior to enactment, which he hopes can be done by the second meeting in November.

Manager Vernau also explained that contributions and liability insurance programs fall under miscellaneous and would be provided to Board Members.

EXECUTIVE SESSION & ADJOURNMENT

President Villone announced adjournment to executive session to discuss labor negotiations update at 7:59 PM