

## MINUTES

### **BOARD OF COMMISSIONERS**

### **LOWER ALLEN TOWNSHIP**

### **BUDGET MEETING**

**October 7, 2024**

### **The following were in ATTENDANCE:**

#### **BOARD OF COMMISSIONERS**

Dean W. Villone, President  
Jennifer Caron, Vice President  
Joshua Nagy  
Charles Brown  
Joseph Swartz (via phone)

#### **TOWNSHIP PERSONNEL**

Thomas Vernau, Township Manager  
Rebecca Davis, Assistant Township Manager  
David Holl, Public Safety Director  
Leon Crone, Police Captain  
Anthony Deaven, EMS Captain  
Tom Rigling, Chief, Fire and Rescue Services  
Alycia Knoll, Finance Director  
Isaac Sweeney, PE, Community & Economic  
Development Director  
Renee' Greenawalt, Recording Secretary

President Villone called the October 7, 2024 Budget Meeting of the Board of Commissioners to order at 6:05 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 15 minutes allotted per person to speak at the podium. There were none.

#### **BUDGET INTRODUCTION**

President Villone expressed the Board's interest in viewing the overall view of the budget and a five-year plan at an upcoming meeting, which would be helpful to determine how each department budget fits into the plan. He also noted the potential for the Board to consider updating the spending resolution.

#### **Department of Public Safety**

Director Holl presented the budget for the Department of Public Safety and referenced the budget materials that had been provided to support the presentation. As in the past, under the Department of Public Safety, budgets will be presented for Police (410), EMS (412) and Public Safety (415). New for this year is a budget line for Fire Rescue Service (419), which was created from splitting historically Public Safety support expenditures from the 415 budget expenditures. Additionally, there are line items for each Fire Fund: Lower Allen (411) and Lisburn (416). He noted that each discipline worked to meet or be lower than the base limitation ceiling allowed while still meeting citizen service demands. For 2025, expenditures to line items were held or reduced where possible. He cautioned that call volumes and staffing needs rose in 2024, with upward trends putting pressure on the 7.5% budget caps, especially for the 412, 415, and 419 budget lines.

Director Holl next addressed significant 2025 anticipated projects for each discipline. Police (410) include taser upgrades, uniform items, in-car connectivity upgrades, and a mental health wellness check program. EMS (412) includes investment in staff to improve recruitment and retention while continuing to provide the highest quality patient care. Public Safety (415) includes the transfer of 415 funds to a new budget category of 419 for the Division of Fire Rescue Service budget items

under the responsibility of the Township Fire Chief. Finally, Fire Rescue (419) involves a capital purchase of a new fire engine (Squad 12-2) budgeted at \$1,049,960.

Next, specific significant changes were presented for each operating budget.

**410 – Police Department Budget** – Captain Crone presented the budget, noting it represents about a 6.8 % increase and does not include any additional full-time personnel. A staffing study was completed in 2024 and will be presented later. Previewing the staffing study, he noted that personnel adjustments would be needed.

Next, Captain Crone highlighted significant changes in the line items.

**410-133 – Salary Patrolmen:** The current budget proposes a salary increase to \$20/hour for part-time CSO. Other rates include anticipated increases of around 3-5%. Estimates are presented since the police contract is still in negotiations.

**410.191 Uniform Purchase:** Increase of \$28,400. Dress uniforms, increase to detective clothing allowance, 8-officer vest/helmet/mask replacements, and new bike uniforms.

**410.245 Operating Supplies:** Increase of \$56,000 for upgrade to all TASER units.

**410.260 Minor Equipment:** \$8500 increase for modem upgrades, eBike bike rack, Watchguard lease, conference room technology, mobile computer replacement cost adjustment, evidence room gun cabinet, TSU lights and cord reels. Additionally, the purchase of a Faraday Box for phone analysis.

**410-312 Software and License:** Increase of \$23,480 for licensing changes and expenditure line-item shifts, increased LPR maintenance and Clearview AI maintenance.

**410.318 Other Professional:** \$5000 for Mental Health Wellness Program.

**410.421 Training:** \$1000 increase. Fewer officers seeking tuition reimbursement and fewer instructor recertifications; addition of Cellebrite detective training and PowerRecall training aid software.

**Capital Items:** Replacement of two marked cars for \$175,870, and replacement of one unmarked truck for \$75,000

Commissioner Caron asked how funding for the school district resource officer is addressed in the budget. Captain Crone explained that the Township pays 25% of the salary and benefits and the school district funds the remaining 75%.

President Villone again expressed a desire to evaluate the budget information within the context of the overall five-year plan and noted the potential for the Board to consider an update to the prior spending resolution. Commissioner Nagy echoed those sentiments.

#### **412 – EMS Department Budget**

Captain Deaven presented the budget and noted that no additional positions were being proposed for 2025. The proposed budget includes an overall increase of 7.5%; twelve, line items with a decrease or no change, seven with an increase (not including wages) and one new line for third party EMS billing. Budget lines with decreases include office supplies, forms, and minor equipment.

Increases are in the following lines:

**412.140 Salaries** – The primary increases are found in salaries to ensure competitive pay for existing staff, and the ability to attract new personnel. He expressed concern about the lack of competitiveness in the current offering of salary and benefits.

**412.192 Uniform Maintenance** - \$2000 increase to account for inflation, usage and historical data

**412.220 General Expenditures** - \$1000 increase based on actual expenditure and historical data.

**412.131 Gasoline** - \$1000 increase based on historical data, call volume and inflation.

**412.232 Diesel** - \$2000 increase based on historical data, call volume and inflation.

**412.244 Oxygen** - \$500 increase

**421.318 Other Professional** - \$2000 for medical director contractual fees and ESO fees associated with call volume.

**412.321 Communication** - \$500

**412.325 Postage** - \$500

**412.340 Advertising and printing** - \$1000

**412.378 Radio Repair** - \$500

**Capital Items** – A new ambulance. This purchase was approved in February 2024 and ordered. It is expected to be delivered in 2025 or 2026.

Board members and staff discussed the proposed salary increases and recognition of the challenge in attracting staff when competing for similar wages in other types of work, as well as the need to offer more enticing benefits to be competitive, and to give consideration for a defined benefit plan. President Villone suggested the topic for an upcoming pension committee meeting.

#### **415 – Public Safety Department Budget**

Director Holl presented the information. He noted that many of the line items had no change or were reduced from 2024. He also reminded members that some line items were now split between department 415 and 419 and some were moved to 419.

Increased expenditure on Public Safety include:

**415.260 Minor Equipment** - \$15,000 to replace the EOC chairs.

**415.312 Software Licenses** - \$400 for Power Time Scheduler due to adding users, \$1500 for Knox Box annual maintenance, Power DMS increased due to consolidation of users, \$7500 to add *IamResponding* license to consider dispatch interface option with Cumberland County CAD, LA Alerts increased cost.

**415.730 – LA Station 1 Facility Study** - \$12,000 to review kitchen configuration and make recommendations for renovation. **Lower Allen Station 2 Relocation Site Study** - \$11,000 to expand upon the 2024 building concept study that concluded the current Station 2 was not capable of remodel, retrofit or renovation to meet programming needs.

Capital Items: \$12,000 for Preemption Device Signal upgrades.

#### **419 – Fire & Rescue Services Budget**

Chief Rigling presented the budgets for the Division of Fire Rescue Services and reviewed significant changes. He noted that many line items were funded at the same level or reduced from the prior year.

**419.412** – This is a new budget line. 2025 will be the first full year of salaries for the Fire Chief and Volunteer Training Coordinator.

**419.130** – PSO Salary Regular has been adjusted due to the creation of Fire Chief and Volunteer coordinator

**419.134** – PSO Part-time Salary increased by \$19,428 due to giving part-time personnel access to PSO II pay rate and includes funds to provide Monday-Friday PSO coverage at Lisburn.

**419.191** – Increase of \$9000 to ensure all PSOs have new DFRS uniforms.

**419.192** – Increase of \$800 for uniform maintenance

**419.260** - \$4600 for Squad 12 tool and equipment reorganization project and new iPads for emergency response apps

**419.321** - \$2200 for Communication – DFRS cell phones

**419.420** - \$3400 for Dues and Subscriptions, including increases to Pennboc and ICC for part time PSO memberships that are needed to perform inspections.

**419.421** - \$24,500 for training needs for ongoing professional development and tuition assistance.

**419.415** - \$7000 for public relations efforts related to fire prevention and volunteer recruitment.

Chief Rigling addressed the overall goals of the division related to fire response times and the standards set by the National Standard for the Organization and Deployment of Fire Suppression Operations. He also presented a summary of the response participation trends.

**Capital Item** - \$65,000 for a response vehicle for the Division of Fire Chief

#### **411 – Lower Allen Volunteer Fire Company**

Chief Rigling presented significant operating budget changes.

**411.191** - \$2000 for new member uniforms

**411.192** - \$350 for uniform maintenance

**411.196** – \$17,390 for VFSAP Pension

**411.210** - \$500 for office supplies (reduced from 2024)

**411.220** – General Expenditures – Unchanged items include \$4250 for banquet, \$56,223 for college live-in program, and \$15,000 for the volunteer incentive program. \$35,000 for the Volunteer Station Response Program, which provides stipends to volunteers who staff Station 1 for shifts. \$9514 (increase of \$5000) for the Volunteer Recruitment/Mentor Program  
**411.245** - \$6870 (increase of \$1650) includes Hydrant markers and all categories of fire suppression foam  
**411.260** – Small Tool and Minor Equipment decreased from \$9380 to \$5780  
**411.312** – Service Bureau - \$16,625 (\$737 increase) for Alpine RedNMX fire reporting software  
**411.314** – Legal Services - \$1090 (no change)  
**411.321** – Communications - \$18,380 (decrease of \$6700) due to reduced cell phone reimbursement with DFRS transition and restricting of FIOS service for Stations 1 & 2  
**411.373** – Maintenance & Repair of Building - \$27,650 includes \$6000 for roof patching of Station #2, and \$9000 for bunk room partitions.  
**411.421** - Training – reduced from \$7200 to \$2200 for 2 EMT Classes.  
**411.730** - Capital Items – Rescue Truck Replacement \$1,048,960

The budget also includes no changes to Postage, Advertising and Printing, Utilities, Maintenance & Repair of Office Equipment, and Equipment, Knox Box repairs, Dues & Subscriptions, and Public Relations

#### **416- Lisburn Community Fire Company**

**416.220** – General Expenditures – remain the same for all line items except for a \$500 increase for recruitment and retention programs.  
**416.230-232** – no changes for heating oil, gasoline and diesel fuel.  
**416.260** – Minor Equipment – Reduction of \$2570  
**416.311** – Audit \$5725  
**416.318** – Professional Services – Reduction of \$1795 – Power DMS cost moved to 415 budget  
**416.321** – Communications – \$7600 – Increase for iPad Connectivity to access County CAD and Alpine RMS Fire Reporting, and Internet Comcast for fire crew areas.  
**416.373** – Maintenance and Repair of Building - \$1600 for building access security system  
The budget includes no changes to Maintenance and Repair of Equipment or Vehicles or to Training.  
**416.730** Capital - There are no 2025 projected projects.

Director Holl summarized the presentations, stating that all disciplines within the Department of Public Safety worked to reduce or maintain line items while focusing on optional service delivery goals and objectives. The Ad Hoc Committee in 2019 advanced a five-year strategic vision of Public Safety service and development. Public Safety services excelled in all programmatic areas. 2025 will be the final year of the study's recommendations. Divisions will be examining the recommendations to develop another five-year strategic plan prior to the 2026 budget cycle.

Commissioner Nagy inquired about the radio purchases for the new county system. Director Holl explained that the equipment has been paid for, but is still undergoing a testing process, and he anticipates the radios will be available in the spring or summer of 2025, with the system transition implemented in fall.

Commissioner Brown asked about hybrid positions and the relevant budgeting. Director Holl said those positions are in place, but the staffing structure requires a comprehensive evaluation going into the 2026 budget year.

President Villone acknowledged recognition of future personnel needs. He expressed agreement with the need to make salary and benefit adjustments to be competitive going forward. He noted appreciation for the preparation of the budget information.

#### **EXECUTIVE SESSION**

President Villone announced the board would adjourn to executive session to discuss a real estate purchase.

#### **ADJOURNMENT**

The meeting was adjourned at 8:08 PM