

**Budget Discussion Special Meeting
August 20, 2025**

The East Lampeter Township Board of Supervisors met on Monday, August 20, 2025, at 3:00pm at the East Lampeter Township Office: 2250 Old Philadelphia Pike, Lancaster, PA 17602. The statement of recorded meetings was played for all in attendance. Chairman Ethan Demme called the meeting to order at 7:00pm, followed by the Pledge of Allegiance. In addition to Chairman Demme, in attendance were Vice Chairman Mike Thornton, and Supervisors Mr. Roger Rutt, Mr. Ted Gallagher and Mr. Corey Meyer. Also present in the meeting room were Ms. Tara Hitchens, Township Manager; Ms. Kimberly Piestrak, Assistant Township Manager, Mr. Steve Zerbe, Chief of Police, Mr. Jacob Bowen, Zoning and Planning Director, Mr. Kevin Hostetter, Finance Director, Mr. Charles Thomas, Public Works Director (via Zoom) and Ms. Stephanie Leakway, Administrative Assistant.

Public Present:

Nick Wagner – resident

Robert Hayward – resident

Public Comment (non-agenda items only): None

Consent Agenda:

- a. Approval of August 20, 2025, Board of Supervisors meeting agenda

Mr. Meyer moved to approve the consent agenda, seconded by Mr. Gallagher. The motion carried.

Budget Discussion:

- a. Kevin Hostetter, Director of Finance- overview of current year finances

Overall, 2024 expenditure was under budget by \$1.2 million, which helped the General Fund end 2024 with a higher than anticipated balance. 2025 revenues will likely be lower than budgeted and a \$1 million deficit is expected at the end of 2025. 2024 Sewer Fund revenues were as expected. 2025 revenues are expected to be under budget and expenditures equal to budget. With no changes to revenue or expenditure, the fund will reach a negative balance in 2029. The East Lampeter Sewer Authority has authorized a 10% fee increase per EDU as of January 1, 2027. Several supervisors voiced a preference for smaller, incremental increases beginning in 2026.

- b. Steve Zerbe, Chief of Police – discussion of police department

To prepare for 8 retirements upcoming in 2026 and 2027, Chief Zerbe recommends hiring 4-5 officers this year and another 3-4 in 2026. Higher equipment costs are expected to purchase new gun lockers and outfit new officers. The department also needs to replace outdated technology. Chief is researching cloud-based services to reduce equipment costs. He also expects an increase in vehicle expenses. Mr. Meyer suggested looking into a lease program. Personnel costs are the largest expense for the department, though they remain understaffed. Chief is minimizing overtime with careful scheduling. Chief and supervisors discussed the service agreement with Upper Leacock Township.

- c. Charlie Thomas, Director of Public Works – discussion of parks, roads, sewer

Mr. Thomas recommends keeping a staff of 14 and would like to fill an open position. Equipment expenses will include replacing a mini track-hoe and call radios. The Nolt's Mill house roof has been repaired but will need to be replaced in 2026 at an estimated cost of \$242,000, including fees to move PP&L wires. A Green Light Go grant could offset costs to update crosswalks along Route 340. Staff and supervisors discussed communication needs and how to maximize radio access while controlling costs.

d. Jacob Bowen, Director of Planning – discussion of planning, zoning, building

Salary expenditure will be higher now that the department is fully staffed. Planning and implementation for the Comprehensive Plan is anticipated to continue into 2026 with approximately \$18,000 in costs and fees to also carry forward.

e. Kim Piestrak, Assistant Township Manager – discussion of Stormwater fund

Video pipe inspections began in 2023 revealing areas for repair and replacement at a cost of \$2.4 million. Repairs are expected to begin in 2025 and continue into 2026. Additional pipe video inspections will continue, which could identify more areas needing repair. To meet PA DEP MS4 requirements, \$500,000 has been budgeted for Pollution Reduction Projects.

f. Tara Hitchens, Township Manager – discussion of capital funds, other general fund expenditures, and saving opportunities

IT costs are expected to be \$40,000 to replace and store servers. 2027 expenditures are expected to be higher to replace more servers and switches. Staff want to develop a replacement schedule. Mr. Demme recommended co-locating servers to save on storage expenses. He also recommended researching different phone and internet providers to potentially save on those services.

Recreation programming has been successful with hopes of expanding offerings. The Summer Playground hopes to double enrollment next summer. Approximately \$60,000 will go to equipment, programming, supplies, and seasonal staff. Supervisors suggested student volunteers could reduce staffing costs. Staff and supervisors discussed the reach of Recreation programming.

Ongoing codification is estimated to cost \$5,000. Library donations total \$44,440. LEMSA contributions remain at \$56,000. CV SEEDS contributions will be \$14,750. Several supervisors requested information on circulation rates and residents' use of libraries to determine if there will be any changes to those contributions.

The Capital Reserve expenditure will include \$600,000 towards engineering costs for the Bridgeport Route 462 project between Tennyson and Strasburg Pike. Work is slated to begin in 2026. Two studies for the Lancaster Heritage Pathway are in progress to be completed in 2026. The Strasburg Pike to Oakview Road trail project construction will begin this October, continuing into 2026. Bidding for Lincoln Highway Streetscape Phase 3 should happen by the end of 2025 and project funds expended in 2026.

Tax Increment Financing will be used for the gateway signage at the east and west ends of Lincoln Highway. The Township is collaborating with PennDOT on the western gateway as they complete a project in the area. The Township is also working with PennDOT on Lincoln Highway wayfinding signage.

Staff proposed several areas of potential cost-saving. The Township could recall a DEA Detective to return to working at the Township. Staff are also considering ways to decrease personnel costs through the use of consultants. A fire services tax could help with funding apparatus replacements. Supervisors would like to discuss this tax further at future meetings and have full buy-in from the Emergency Services Committee before considering how it would be assessed. Mr. Demme would like to see the recreation programming reach non-profit status to open the potential for grant funding. Staff and supervisors discussed subdividing the Nolt's Mill property to allow for the option of selling the house.

Ms. Hitchens asked supervisors for input on tax rates as the budget is developed noting the millage rate is based on assessed values and some properties are now below the 2018 assessed value. Mr. Thornton noted a 5% increase was committed to in 2024 and 2025.

Public Comment (non-agenda items only):

Mr. Nick Wagner asked how police staffing numbers are calculated. He is concerned that police department understaffing could be a problem when residential development projects are completed and the population increases.

Adjournment:

Mr. Meyer moved to adjourn, seconded by Mr. Rutt. The motion carried and meeting adjourned.

The next regular meeting will be held on Monday, September 15, 2025, at 7:00pm in the Township office.