

Board of Supervisors Budget Meeting
August 28, 2023

The East Lampeter Township Board of Supervisors met on Monday, August 28, 2023 at 5:00 pm at the East Lampeter Township Office: 2250 Old Philadelphia Pike, Lancaster, PA 17602 for a budget meeting. Chairman John Blowers called the meeting to order at 5:00 pm followed by the Pledge of Allegiance. In addition to Mr. John Blowers, Supervisors present were Mr. Corey Meyer, Mr. Ethan Demme, Mr. Roger Rutt and Mr. Mike Thornton. Also present in the meeting room was Mr. Ralph M. Hutchison, Township Manager, Ms. Tara Hitchens, Assistant Township Manager, Mr. Charles Thomas, Public Works Director, Mr. Stephen Zerbe, Chief of East Lampeter Township Police Department, Mr. Kevin Hostetter, Finance Director, Mr. Colin Siesholtz, Planning Director and Zoning Officer, and Ms. Stephanie Leakway, Administrative Assistant.

Public Present in Public Meeting Room:

Steve Gribble – 177 N. Ronks Road – Ronks Fire Company

Also, In attendance via Zoom:

None

Public Comment for Non-Agenda items:

None

Consent Agenda:

- a. Approval of the August 28, 2023 Board of Supervisors Budget Meeting Agenda

Motion made by Corey Meyer to approve the Consent Agenda which was seconded by Roger Rutt and unanimously approved by voice vote.

Ms. Tara Hitchens, Assistant Township Manager, indicated that budgeting is never ending and occurs all year long. This meeting is a great start of a process that ensures Township Staff priorities and the Board of Supervisors priorities are in alignment. Last year, the Board was concerned with additional staffing in order for new programs and projects to move forward. The last position within public works has just been filled. Another concern was contemplation for additional volunteer fire service funding. The Emergency Services Committee has formed a finance group who will be discussing how the volunteer fire services in the Township can be funded in various ways. Internal and external communication of East Lampeter Township were also discussed. A Human Resource/Communications Professional has been hired to address this issue. This position will also update and maintain the Township's website and Facebook page and is working on the emergency alert option the Township may look to move forward in the 2024.

Budget Discussion

Kevin Hostetter, Director of Finance

General Fund Revenue:

Mr. Kevin Hostetter, Finance Director, began his report on revenue. Real estate taxes are going to fall \$100,000 short of the budgeted amount, the real estate transfer collections will be over budget, the earned income and local services taxes are 10% short of what was budgeted due to some non-reoccurring payments that occurred in 2022, admission taxes looks like they will exceed the budget

with the Summer and early Fall earnings not yet applied, the cable franchise should be close to even. The police services with Upper Leacock Township is \$135,000 short based on the percentage of calls in Upper Leacock Township which is lower than last year. The general government revenue (zoning department revenue) has received large zoning fee in August so it is already over budget and plans to be well over by year's end. Overall the Township is forecasted to be close to budget or slightly below.

General Fund Expenditures:

Mr. Hostetter continued with expenditures to date for the general fund. Administration is over budget but only slightly at this time. The IT expenditures to date have been slightly below budget as cost savings were found. The administrative building expenditures are on target. The police service expenditures are over budget at this time. However, overall general fund expenditures are at or below the budgeted levels.

Mr. Hostetter reported that according to Moody's credit rating, the Township's credit will be the same as in the past five years which is a high grade rating.

Sewer Fund:

Moving to the sewer fund expenditures to date, Mr. Hostetter noted that the interest earnings are well over budget, connection and tapping fees are under budget however that is dependent on the Greenfield North tapping fees coming into the fund in 2023. Sewer use fees are expected to be on budget with total revenues slightly exceeding budget and total expenses dependent on sewage treatment costs incurred from the City of Lancaster as the Township has not yet received the adjustments for the flow charges. Sewer operation expenses are likely at or below budgeted amounts.

Mr. Meyer questions the use of new fund balance projections. Mr. Hostetter indicated that once the audits were received, the best numbers were used to provide better projections. Mr. Blowers noted that a few years ago the Board of Supervisors adopted a policy of a fund balance of 18%.

Chief Stephen Zerbe, East Lampeter Police Department:

Chief Zerbe noted that in 2022 five (5) officers were hired with one (1) becoming a full time School Resource Officer (SRO), one (1) was let go, and one (1) resigned. Therefore, requesting to hire four (4) officers in 2024. By the end of 2024 there are eleven (11) officers that could leave at any time given their age and service time. There is also the potential for two (2) officers to sign the DROP between now and next summer. Mr. Hutchison stated that the police department has approximately 40 sworn officers at one time and the Board usually budgets heavy meaning there will be overlaps where a new hire starts before an officer retires or resigns. This also helps keep over-time costs down. Chief Zerbe stated that in the last round of interviews the quantity of candidates was down but there were some good quality candidates. He also stated that the department has one CSA and he does not think another is needed. The department has relied on the consortium to establish a list of candidates in the past, it has not been as fruitful recently. It did have a written component for police officer candidates as well as a physical fitness component that the Chief would like to incorporate in future hiring process with a pass/fail score. Chief Zerbe would like a candidate to have a physical fitness test, if they pass move on to the written exam, if they pass move onto the interview. Mr. Meyer suggested teaming up with another Township with a similar size police department to do the testing together. Mr. Blowers questioned when the consortium was established. Chief Zerbe noted 10 or more years ago. Mr. Blowers indicated that due to the job market, the Township is back to their own efforts. Mr. Thornton indicated that in the future, adding a written component is key.

Chief Zerbe is also requesting the Board to purchase six vehicles in 2024. He usually requests 3 or 4 per year however, he is asking for 6 due to the fact that Dodge is discontinuing the Charger in 2024. There are no new vehicles available that are similar so he would like to purchase two extra Chargers before they are discontinued. They would be used very lightly in 2024 and put into circulation in 2025. Mr. Demme suggested the police department start looking at some of the electric police cars that may be available. The Chief agreed that EV cars might be utilized but there is likely need for installation of infrastructure as well. In addition, there would be a need for almost a dual fleet given the charge times.

The final items Chief Zerbe is requesting to be budgeted are new mobile radios. It is a \$200,000 cost of which approximately 3/4 of the funds could be used from Fund 04. Chief Zerbe noted that radios are not purchased on an annual basis and these particular radios would have GPS installed so the department will be ready when GPS option is available through the Lancaster County Wide Communications. Mr. Thornton inquired as to what Fund 04 is with Chief Zerbe noted these are assets from DEA assigned detective.

Mr. Charles Thomas, Director of Public Works:

Mr. Charles Thomas thanked the Board for the new hires this year.

In the 2024 budget there is requested repair of two trucks and replacement of two trucks. Truck #2 needs a chassis replaced but the bed and the plow can be saved and moved over to the new chassis. Another truck needs a new stainless-steel bed. The total for this will be approximately \$187,000. Liquid Fuels Funds can cover a percentage of these costs.

Dump truck #12 needs to be replaced as it is 16-years old. Money is being spent on repairs to save costs to replace it.

The pavilion at Lafayette Park minus the restrooms has been estimated to cost approximately \$127,000.

Mr. Demme asked what the cost would be to plow the entrances and the parking lots of the parks during the winter months. He also asked what the cost would be to extend the restroom use throughout the winter. Mr. Thomas stated that the restrooms are open from April 1st to Veteran's Day every year. Mr. Thomas noted that the existing restroom pipes would freeze in the winter. Mr. Demme suggested porta potties. Mr. Thomas stated that porta potties cost \$125.00 per month. Mr. Thomas indicated he would calculate the cost of plowing the park entrances and parking lots and get back to the Board.

Mr. Thomas is still waiting for prices on the dump pit building which was in the 2023 budget and the 2024 budget would include the pole building that was on the campus improvements plan.

The roof on the Nolt Mill building is leaking and will need to be repaired in 2024. A metal roof that matches the barn behind it will be used.

The mowers are traded in every five years so that the best trade-in value can be obtained. The Parks Department recently considered a new mower that has a higher cut rate and is a bigger machine than the ones they have now. Mr. Demme suggested that electric mowers be considered and priced. Mr. Thomas indicated that he would look into the use and cost of electric mowers.

The Lincoln Highway Streetscape Phase 3 project is scheduled to be constructed in 2024 which is impervious macadam which will need to be swept at certain times of the year. The existing sweeper that the Township owns is too large for the pathway, thus Mr. Thomas is looking to see if a smaller sweeper can be rented, borrowed from another municipality, or purchased.

The handlers for the HVAC system will be here in October. The chiller will arrive in December and be installed in April. Half of the system has already been paid for in 2022 so that the equipment could be purchased.

Township staff is waiting for cost estimates for design and construction for the Willow Road culvert project that is the Board determined should be Township responsibility when High came in with the Lot 5 plan.

Mr. Thomas noted that a bid document being finalized for the bucket truck purchase in 2023 and will be available in the near future.

Mr. Thomas indicated that moving forward documents for public works will also be scanned too as has been done for the zoning/planning/building department.

Mr. Colin Siesholtz, Planning Director and Zoning Officer

Zoning and Planning:

There are no new employees proposed for 2024. The Housing Study is underway. The Comp Plan Process is going to have a full rewrite due to its age. The Township is going forward with its own plan instead of participating in a regional plan. Mr. Demme would like East Lampeter to match the surrounding municipalities as much as possible. Mr. Blowers would like to send a message that East Lampeter is not walking away from anything regional but is considering all of its neighbors. The Hotel Inspection Program will be implemented using a third party and some Township staff to administer the program. The document scanning project is underway.

Stormwater Management:

Cost benefit analysis are being considered for the removal or breaching of four dams along Mill Creek and the clean-up of legacy sediment left behind. Stormwater pipe inspections are going well and will continue for approximately 4 more years at \$100,000 per year. These inspections will result in costs to repair some of the pipes. PRP is currently being reviewed by DEP and the cost range is between \$400,000 and \$600,000.

Ms. Tara Hitchens, Assistant Township Manager

IT:

2023 has been a maintenance year for the IT department. Printers will need to be purchased for the Police Department. An additional tv screen is being considered for the front meeting room so that it can be utilized for online meetings. Ms. Hitchens noted that a kiosk is being considered for the lobby where individuals can make payments. Mr. Meyer and Mr. Demme noted that this isn't something to move forward with at this time. Inquiry was made if the Board of Supervisors wanted tables for use at Township meetings. All Supervisors answered no. Board members noted that would rather accept credit cards at the Township for utility bills and permit payments and improved the ability for credit card payments on the website and eliminate the credit card fee.

Recreation:

It is hoped that the Recreation Director position will be filled by the end of 2023. East Lampeter Township will be funding the salary and program alone. Program costs throughout 2024 will vary depending on the programs the new director determines to provide. The annual salary would be between \$55,000 - \$60,000. Mr. Thornton suggested that the recreation director comes up with a seasonal budget. Mr. Meyer expressed concern with costs at this point in time given the outlook for the next five years. He feels other programs such as emergency services are much more critical than recreation. Mr. Demme agreed. He would like the recreation director to take the 2024 year to come up with a plan. He does not think additional funding for programs should be a part of the 2024 budget.

Misc:

The emergency alert software will be \$10,000 for 2024. Interviews with providers for this type of software ranged from \$5,000-\$40,000.

The codification process is being worked on with consultants for the final document. There is an ongoing cost to the Township to keep up with the resolutions and ordinances that are adopted.

There are more personnel so the parking spaces in the rear of the building are becoming limited. There is a plan for an additional parking area next to the generator in the rear of the building. The cost for this additional area is approximately \$75,000. The Board members felt this was too much to spend on parking and that staff should park in the front of the building.

Libraries:

The question on funding of the libraries has been discussed annually. Mr. Demme likes that library funding is split among all the libraries depending on the percent of usage by East Lampeter Township residents. Mr. Blowers agrees and feels it is a fair way to divide the funds. The library budget in 2022 was \$40,000 and in 2023 was \$42,000. Mr. Demme feels that the Township should cover \$2.50 per capita. He stated the Township is in the ballpark with library funding and the budget should remain the same for 2024. Mr. Meyer agreed.

Funding for Various Projects:

Ms. Hitchens noted that \$10,000 would be put towards homelessness and panhandling efforts in 2024. Mr. Demme stated that regional funding towards dealing with homelessness and pan-handling would be best used if the Township matches a grant that a local non-profit applies for.

From the Capital Reserve Fund, the Phase 3 project of the Lincoln Highway Streetscape Plan will move forward and the Green Light Go project along Old Philadelphia Pike will move forward as well. For the green light go project, the Township's share is \$55,000, the grant was for \$217,500.

The Smart Grow Transportation Project which is the trial from Strasburg Pike to Oakview is a \$2 million project with available funding awarded to the Township at just over \$1 million.

The Township has two grants for the Lancaster Heritage Pathway study, one through the CFA and the other through Connects 2040. For the Connects 2040 study 11 statements of interest have been received.

The Bridgeport project along Route 462 will need to move into engineering, which will be approximately \$600,000 however this will be based on the timing of implementation of the TIP (Transportation Improvement Program).

The Township applied for funding from the Fish & Boat Commission for Gibbons Park but was not successful. The project is \$600,000 for both sides of the park. There is a design for the bridge, 30 parking spaces and a trial system. The Park Capital Reserve Fund does not have \$600,000. The Township is committed to Gibbons Park so the question on whether to use the Capital Fund or delay the project or borrow money for the project. Mr. Demme stated that the Board should put money into the Park Capital Reserve Fund as part of the regular budget so funds will always increase and be available. The funds can be spent when there is enough for a certain project and not be spent until there is enough for the next project. This would be in addition to any grants sought for projects.

It is hoped that the BID (Business Improvement District) will move forward this year under the ICDA. The gateway signage, wayfinding signage, and brand implementation are remaining.

Mr. Meyer asked if there are any revenue opportunities with the ARPA revenue and the opioid settlement. Mr. Hutchison stated that there is approximately \$300,000 from the ARPA revenue that has not been obligated anywhere so it needs to be included in the 2024 budget. The Township will not receive money from the opioid settlement as that goes directly to the County.

In conclusion for the next budget meeting, Mr. Thomas will come back with more accurate cost for truck repairs and purchases that he requested. Mr. Demme would like to increase the false alarm fees. He would also like the Township to look into costs for property tax rebates for volunteer fire fighters and EMS. Mr. Hutchison believes it will be discussed through the finance group of the Emergency Services Committee. Mr. Blowers stated that EMS should not be included because they are not volunteers, they are paid.

Mr. Meyer would like the Board of Supervisors' meetings to start at 7:00pm instead of 7:30pm in 2024. Mr. Hutchison will advertise the Board's decision in December.

Motion made by John Blowers to approve the start time for the Board of Supervisors to be 7:00pm starting in 2024 which was seconded by Corey Meyer and unanimously approved by voice vote.

Adjournment:

On a motion by Mr. Corey Meyer and a second by Mr. Mike Thornton with all voting in favor, the meeting was adjourned at 7:06 pm. The next Board of Supervisors meeting will be held on Monday, September 18, 2023 at 7:30 pm in the East Lampeter Township Office, 2250 Old Philadelphia Pike, Lancaster, PA, 17602 and via ZOOM, check the Township website at www.eastlampertownship.org for more information.

Respectfully submitted,
Ralph M. Hutchison
Township Manager