

LAWRENCE PARK TOWNSHIP
BOARD OF COMMISSIONERS BUDGET MEETING

September 19, 2023

5:00 PM

Present: Commissioner. J. Golden, Commissioner T. Benovic, Commissioner B. Rodemaker, Commissioner J. Moffett, Twp. Secretary C. Cunningham, Twp. Accountant L. Bliley, Tax Collector/Treasurer J. Spitznogle

Residents Present: Pete Ogden, Marcus Jacobs, Chris Buchleitner, Cathi Pawlik, Ed Krugger, Ann Badach, Tom Buchleitner, John O'Hern, Beth O'Hern, Dale Williams, Mark Dalglish

President J. Golden called the 2023 Budget Work Session Meeting to order at 5:00 p.m. and waived the Pledge of Allegiance to the Flag.

L. Bliley stated that they had met with the DCED and a couple members of the Board of Commissioners on August 7, 2023 and presented the Board with all information concerning a comparison for 5 years and the trends of what is happening. Bliley also looked at the attorney fees and mentioned that they are way over the budgeted amount with that being at \$34,000 but with 7K of that being from the previous year due to the Solicitor not sending the final quarter of 2022 until 2023. Bliley also said that after the meeting with DCED she investigated other first-class Townships that were comparable in size to L.P. and did a comparison pulling revenues and expenses giving a sense of where we are compared to other Townships in the state of PA, and those were distributed to the Board members. Also provided was a chart regarding wages paid thus far including benefits. Also mentioned at the DCED meeting was that wages were only being taken from streets and sewers when the employees are working on everything from buildings to parks. Commissioner Golden stated that we should place wages in a separate line on its own.

Expenses were addressed in Parks & Rec. Commissioner Benovic said that she would like to keep the budget the same as 2023. She sees fireworks going up this year but possibly having a farmers' market to help generate some income to help offset the cost of the fireworks which is over \$15,000 this year. Benovic state that she would have to talk to the Maintenance crew regarding the state of aging equipment. Tree and Landscaping is needed to be raised from \$10,000 to \$30,000 as there are many aging trees that need to be taken down before they cause major issues.

The Commissioners addressed questions regarding the contract with Pro-Waste. This is a 3-year contract; with 2 more years to finish out the current contract the current price will not change. Commissioner Golden stated that residents do not have to use Pro if they do not want, they can use another contractor if they choose to.

Building utilities soared dramatically at the beginning of 2023 which was totally unexpected. We expect that utilities will remain approximately the same. Custodial wages will be \$2,100 for the year. 4230 Iroquois Ave. now houses the MDJ and rent will be coming in to cover the renovations.

Commissioner Benovic commented that she noticed an increase regarding IT and Communications services. Because of the risk of Cyber-attacks, the Computer securities will have to be upgraded. A computer is expected to need replacement in the coming year. This budget will need to be looked at more closely in a later meeting.

Code Enforcement will move up to \$7,600 per year. The officer works on an as-needed basis and is paid at an hourly rate.

The streets department is on track for this year. The total snowfall this year was only ½ of what is normal for our area, so there is more money than what was expected thus far. Everyone agreed that to cut this budget at this point would be a mistake as this has been an unprecedented calm year. As far as vehicle maintenance, the crew has been doing most all of our own maintenance such as oil changes and general maintenance of them. The Board agreed to come back to this budget and look closer at this at a later meeting, and have Gary attend and explain what their needs are. Traffic lights budgeted for 2023 will remain for 2024. Street Maintenance and Construction and Resurfacing will be considered at a later meeting.

Wages were considered; per Commissioner Golden, there will be no wage increase for the non-uniformed employees. Commissioner pay will be increased from \$1,875 to \$3,145 for new incoming Township Commissioners. The police department will receive the contracted 3% increase.

The Municipal office supplies and postage expenses were considered and appropriate cuts and additions were made.

J. Spitznogle presented the Board with a chart concerning tax rates, percentages, and projected amounts. Spitznogle also said that the County has made changes in how bills are sent out which were confusing residents. She has a solution to this problem and she is going to work on solving this issue for 2024.

The next meeting Gary from Maintenance and Police Chief Morell will be invited to discuss their departments with the Board.

Commission T. Benovic motioned to adjourn the meeting at 7:05 p.m., seconded by Commissioner J. Moffett and the motion carried.

Respectfully Submitted,

Cindy Jo Cunningham
Township Secretary