

The Board's Minutes of the East Donegal Township Board of Supervisors
Special Meeting
Held on October 12, 2017

A special meeting of the Board of Supervisors of East Donegal Township was held on Thursday, October 12, at 4:00 PM in the East Donegal Township Municipal Building, 190 Rock Point Road, Marietta, PA 17547.

The meeting was called to order by Supervisor Dennis J. Drager.

Roll call of Supervisors: Present were Dennis J. Drager, Chairman; Allen D. Esbenshade, Vice Chairman; John E. Murphy, Jr., Supervisor and Jeffrey Butler, Township Manager. Also attending were Craig Underwood, Township Zoning Officer/Building Code Official and Jake Bair, Director of Public Works/Roadmaster.

Mr. Drager stated that the special meeting was being held to discuss the preparation of the 2018 Township Budget for the Township's General Fund and asked Mr. Butler to lead the discussion.

Mr. Butler highlighted the proposed timeline for consideration and adoption of the 2018 Budget. It's anticipated that a preliminary budget will be approved for public review at the November 2, 2017 meeting of the Board and that adoption of the budget would occur at the December 7, 2017 meeting of the Board. Should revisions require additional time for consideration, the budget must be adopted before the end of the year.

Mr. Butler explained the effect the Lancaster County Reassessment project will have on the Township tax rate. Pennsylvania law provides for the establishment of the initial tax rate when any county implements a countywide revision of assessment. When levying the tax for the first year following the reassessment, the Township must reduce the tax rate so that the amount of taxes does not exceed the total amount in the preceding year under the previous assessment values.

Based on the 2017 tax rate of 3.95 mils and an assessment value of \$517,443,800 the amount of taxes totaled \$2,043,899.85. To determine the initial tax rate the 2017 total tax amount of \$2,053,899.85 is divided by the new assessment valuation of \$655,831,600. As a result, the new tax rate would be 3.1165 mils, or \$3.1165 for every \$1,000 of assessed valuation.

The average increase in assessed value in the Township was 27.28%. Given a new tax rate of 3.1165 mils, properties that experienced an increase in assessed value less than 27.28% will experience a decrease in Township taxes. Properties that increased in assessed value greater than 27.28% will therefore experience an increase in Township taxes.

Mr. Butler presented a draft of the projected revenues for the 2018 Budget. This draft projected an increase of 2.43% in revenue from the adopted 2017 budget.

On the expenditures side, Mr. Butler indicated that the draft budget would incorporate a 3% pay rate increase for Township employees, reflect an almost 4% increase in police contract costs, and an almost 5% increase the amount budgeted for employee insurances.

The Board was given the opportunity to identify projects, programs and policies that would be of interest that could impact the 2018 budget or subsequent Township budgets.

Mr. Murphy expressed an interest in attempting to have the Township non-uniform pension plan 90% funded within a few years.

Board members mentioned park projects such as resurfacing of the walking trail in Bridle Path Park, creation of a parking area in Chickies Creek Day Use Area, improvements to the Northwest Lancaster County River Trail to address conflicts between bicyclists and pedestrians, construction of a roller hockey rink in Fuhrman Park, and the grading of a portion of Riverfront Park for use as youth soccer fields.

Roadway improvement projects discussed included the paving of alleys in Maytown and improvements to streets in the village of Rowenna.

The Board identified stormwater improvements in Rowenna and the streambank restoration project highlighted in the Township Pollution Reduction Plan as potential stormwater management projects.

Finally, the Board discussed the need to explore the expanded use of technology to make user-friendly improvements for residents, such as the potential expanded acceptance of credit cards and on-line access to Township ordinances and regulations.

Mr. Butler highlighted other expenditures contained in the budget that address donations or contributions to outside entities and provided the 2017 budgeted amounts for these items.

The Board expressed an interest in maintaining the donation amount to the Fire Departments at the 2017 level. However, it was suggested that additional funds be budgeted and earmarked to address the apparatus purchase proposed by the Maytown East Donegal Township Fire Department.

The Board expressed a desire to increase the amount donated to Northwest Emergency Medical Services to \$12,000. In addition, the donation to the Milanof-Schock Library should be increase to \$35,700.00.

All other donation or contributions should be budgeted at the 2017 levels.

Mr. Bair presented a list of projects proposed for 2018. These included the replacement of the public works storage shed, equipment purchases, roadway projects and park improvements.

The project to replacement of the public works storage shed includes the removal of the existing building and construction of a new building adjoining the new salt shed. The proposed storage shed would include multiple bays with overhead doors.

Proposed equipment purchases include a new bed for the International dump truck, a plow for the Freightliner dump truck and a new landscape trailer.

It's proposed that only one roadway project would be funded through the Township's General Fund. The proposed East High Street project would include improvements to the east side of the square and would extend east to the access drive into Fuhrman Park. Improvements would include new sidewalks, curbs, roadway reconstruction and stormwater facilities. Due to the nature of the project, and its coordination with residents and other utilities, there is the potential that the project will extend into 2019 for completion.

Mr. Bair identified projects proposed within Township parks. These projects include the paving of the parking lot in Fuhrman Park, the replacement of the backstop on field #4 in Fuhrman Park and the grading of the infield surface of field #3 in Fuhrman Park. Play swings are proposed to be added to Riverfront Park. The pavilion roof is to be replace in R&J Park.

Mr. Butler stated that funds have been budgeted for the completion of a scope of work to be done to the farmhouse located in Chickies Creek Day Use Area. This scope of work would be a first step in implementation of the resident curator program discussed by the Township Park Commission and Board of Supervisors.

Mr. Bair indicated that other roadway improvement projects are proposed to be undertaken and funded from the Township's Highway Aid Fund. These include improvements to Village Square Drive and Morning Circle and Beattys Tollgate Road. In addition, oil and chip surfacing is proposed to Donegal Springs Road, Iron Bridge Road, portions of Long Lane, Beattys Tollgate Road and Oak Road. Winter road salt purchases will also be funded by the Township's Highway Aid fund.

Mr. Butler briefly discussed the impact of the new trash and recycling contract may have on the Township's Trash and Recycling Fund and the collection service rates paid by residents. The increase in the per unit cost under the new trash and recycling contract may result in the need to increase costs to residents that receive the service sometime over the next three years.

Mr. Butler presented a draft of the anticipated expenditures for the 2018 Budget. This draft reflected the projects discussed and reflects a decrease of 1.13% in expenditures from the adopted 2017 budget.

Mr. Butler stated that the draft budget will be revised based on the additional information gathered from the meeting and the receipt of refined cost estimates. It's anticipated that the final preliminary budget will be prepared for the November 2, 2017 meeting of the Board of Supervisors.

Adjournment

A motion was made by Mr. Esbenshade and seconded by Mr. Murphy to adjourn at 6:10 PM.

Respectfully Submitted,
Jeffrey L. Butler, Township Secretary