

# **Board of Supervisors Budget Workshop Meeting #2**

**Monday, October 28, 2024 | 6:00 p.m. | Middletown Township Municipal Center**

1) Call to Order, Pledge of Allegiance, and Roll Call.

Supervisor Mike Ksiazek called the meeting to order at 6:00 P.M. and led the Pledge of Allegiance.

Supervisors Ksiazek, Kane, and Payne (via Zoom) attended the meeting, along with the Township Manager Stephanie Teoli Kuhls, Assistant Township Manager Nick Valla, Finance Director Mega Bhandary, Interim Fire Chief Don Harris, Director of Parks & Recreation Paul Kopera, Parks & Recreation Program Coordinator Patrick Graham, Director of Public Works Eric Gartenmayer, Director of Building & Zoning Jim Ennis, IT Manager Chad Megeed, Chief of Police Joseph Bartorilla, Captain Peter Feeney, and Lieutenant Aileen Parker. Supervisors Hannah and Quirple were absent.

2) Public Comment.

Bob Feather, Highland Park Way, expressed interest in the Stormwater Fund discussion of the meeting as a member of the Stormwater Advisory Committee. He also expressed his desire to see the Stormwater Advisory Committee made into a standing committee.

3) 2024 Capital Project Update.

Assistant Township Manager Nick Valla highlighted some of the major capital projects completed in 2024, including the Public Works Site Improvements, Level 3 EV Charging Stations, Forsythia Crossing Park Renovations, among others. Total 2024 Capital Fund expenses are expected to be \$6,195,965, about \$782,000 lower than budgeted. This figure is offset by approximately \$2 million in grant revenue.

\$2.4 million was transferred from the Investment Fund to the Capital Fund for 2025 projects. The Capital Fund is expected to begin 2025 with nearly \$3.9 million in fund balance.

4) 2025 Capital Budget.

a) Highway Aid Fund.

Mr. Valla shared that the Road Improvement Program is budgeted from the Highway Aid Fund once again in 2025. He noted that while this can be accomplished again in 2025, that this cannot be sustained every year. Ms. Teoli Kuhls noted that a road condition assessment system is proposed from the Capital Fund which uses artificial intelligence to assess road conditions, adding that this will be essential as funds for road paving become more limited.

b) Capital Fund.

Mr. Valla reviewed handouts with proposed Mission-Critical capital projects and discussed individual projects. The provided lists propose nearly \$5 million in Capital projects with nearly \$2.6 million in earned grants and spending from other funds. The net impact to the Capital Fund is expected to be about \$2.4 million. An additional \$1.25 million may be secured in Redevelopment Authority (RDA) grants or other grants and external funding.

Mr. Valla briefly reviewed other non-Mission-Critical projects separately, many of which have other pending grant applications. These projects are not included in the Capital Fund budget.

c) Stormwater Fund.

Mr. Valla reported that the Stormwater Advisory Committee's formal recommendation to the Board of Supervisors will be made on November 18<sup>th</sup>, but confirmed that the Committee is unanimously recommending a Stormwater Impact Fee. Ms. Teoli Kuhls added that the Environmental Advisory Council also concurs with this recommendation.

The fee structure being proposed by the Committee is expected to generate \$1,790,427 in revenue annually. The Committee reviewed a five-year plan for capital projects during their investigation, several of which are noted for implementation in 2025, including Langhorne Gables Phase II and Reetz Avenue.

Mr. Valla added that the Committee stressed their desire to improve maintenance of stormwater infrastructure as part of their recommendation. As a result, \$200,000 of fee revenue will be transferred to the General Fund for additional maintenance. Mr. Valla added that the Committee requested a maintenance plan which is being developed by staff.

Ms. Kane asked if impact fees could be assessed on land developments as they are being proposed and reviewed. Ms. Teoli Kuhls stated that she would look into it.

Mr. Feather said he agreed with everything Mr. Valla presented and that he is in favor of a Stormwater Impact Fee and looks forward to seeing the maintenance plan.

Ms. Kane asked about the cost of fee collection. Mr. Valla shared that he received an estimate from the Tax Collector to collect only residential fees. He also shared that he received an estimate from Berkheimer, a third-party service already used by the Township, which could service all or just commercial properties. Mr. Valla stated that Berkheimer could service all properties for about half the cost of the Tax Collector and Berkheimer jointly collecting fees.

5) Other Business.

a) Resolution #24-20R adding fees for body-worn camera video.

Police Chief Joe Bartorilla shared that body-worn cameras are being implemented in the Police Department currently. He advised the need for the Township's fee schedule to include a fee for parties requesting video records. He is recommending a \$100 fee, consistent with Pennsylvania State Police and other municipal departments.

*Mr. Ksiazek moved to adopt Resolution #24-20R, seconded by Ms. Kane. Motion carried 3-0.*

b) Resolution #24-21R authorizing application to PECO Green Region Grant Program.

Mr. Valla shared that the Township was just awarded a \$1 million grant to add LED field lighting at Middletown Community Park. The PECO Green Region Grant Program is facilitating a special funding opportunity to award one project with \$50,000. Since this project has funding to proceed, it is recommended to seek additional funding to maximize the project.

Ms. Kane asked if the entire park will be converted to LED lights with this project. Mr. Kopera advised that he expects most of the park to be converted, but not all of it.

*Mr. Ksiazek moved to adopt Resolution #24-21R, seconded by Ms. Kane. Motion carried 3-0.*

- c) Resolution #24-22R declaring emergency drought conditions.  
Fire Chief Don Harris advised that a prolonged period without rain is causing an increased risk of fires. He noted that Bucks County recently announced a ban on open burning and that the Township should follow suit. The proposed resolution would give staff proper authority to do so.

*Mr. Ksiazek moved to adopt Resolution #24-22R, seconded by Ms. Kane. Motion carried 3-0.*

- d) Discussion and potential action on Retirement Incentive Program.  
Mr. Valla shared that he and Ms. Teoli Kuhls have been assessing the feasibility of an early retirement incentive program (ERIP). He noted that it is feasible to implement one for employees over age 65 by December 31, 2024, who have completed ten or more years of full-time employment. He said there are seven employees who would qualify, five of whom are in Public Works. He noted that many employees of the Public Works Department are older and that a retirement incentive would help jumpstart succession planning.

Mr. Valla shared that the proposed incentive is six months (1,040 hours) of compensation at the employee's 2024 rate. He added that depending on which employees accept the incentive, savings of \$150,000 over three years are expected. He concluded by saying that if the Board wishes to proceed, an ordinance must be drafted and advertised.

Ms. Teoli Kuhls added that if the Board wishes to proceed, it would be preferable for the Board to authorize drafting and advertisement of the ordinance tonight so she may begin to move the process forward before the end of the year.

*Mr. Ksiazek moved to authorize drafting and advertisement of an Early Retirement Incentive Program (ERIP) ordinance, seconded by Ms. Kane. Motion carried 3-0.*

- 6) Adjournment.

*Supervisor Kane moved to adjourn the meeting, seconded by Supervisor Payne.*

The meeting was adjourned at 6:37 P.M.