

**MINUTES**  
**EXETER TOWNSHIP BOARD OF SUPERVISORS SPECIAL BUDGET MEETING**  
**MONDAY, OCTOBER 19, 2020**

**Special Budget Meeting**

A Special Budget Meeting of the Exeter Township Board of Supervisors held virtually was called to order on Monday, October 19, 2020 at 6:00 PM by David Speece, Chairperson.

**Supervisors Present:** David Speece, Chairperson  
Michelle Kircher, Vice Chairperson  
John Cusatis  
Gregory Galtere  
Joseph Staub

**Absent:** None

**Others in Attendance:** Jeff Bartlett, Township Manager  
Will Brugger, Zoning Officer  
Laurie Getz, Township Secretary  
Clarence Hamm, Highway Superintendent  
Larry Piersol, Fleet Manager  
Jen Savage, Finance Director

**REGULAR MEETING**

The Meeting was opened with the Pledge to the Flag.

**PUBLIC COMMENTS:** Agenda Items

\*Public comments were submitted in advance of the meeting via email and voicemail. The e-mail comments were dictated by computer software.\*

**David Hughes;** Commented on the departmental budget presentations. Asked about deficits that he believes that the presentations demonstrate. Asked about the Reading Country Club budget, doesn't see it included. Commented on planned improvements for Pineland Park. Commented on Communications Budget. Discussed program-based budgeting and mentioned a right to know reports filed previously.

**Ms. Savage** responded to the comments clarifying that only departmental revenue sources are being presented tonight. All of tonight's presentations are general fund departments. The Highway Department does not have a revenue source and so is supported by the general fund revenues. The draft budget will include the entirety of revenue and expense pieces for review. Reading Country Club budget presentation will occur on November 2<sup>nd</sup>. Discussed program-based budgeting.

**John Carmello;** Inquired about the increase in Highway Administration costs for 2020.

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**Ms. Savage** explained that an employee moved from a union position into a management role in early 2020 causing the increase.

### **PRESENTATIONS**

#### **Highway Department 2021 Budget Presentation**

**Mr. Hamm** and **Mr. Piersol** presented the Highway and Fleet 2021 budget proposal. A copy of the presentation is attached to these minutes.

**Mr. Piersol** reviewed the overall mission and personnel makeup. **Mr. Speece** asked what a normal staff compliment was in the past. **Mr. Hamm** replied that two years ago there had been 18. Currently there are 9. **Ms. Savage** explained that there are 3 budgeted additional positions included in the budget.

**Mr. Hamm** explained that they are seeking to purchase a new paving machine. As they acquire new staff they would like to bring more of the paving work back in house that has been contracted out. Also discussed the mowing, the large number of roads in the township requires significant staff time.

**Mr. Hamm** reviewed the 2021 paving projects and explained how important it is to keep up with the work. Reviewed Highway Expense categories and explained types of expenses included in each line item.

**Mr. Piersol** reviewed vehicle maintenance expenses included in the liquid fuels fund.

**Mr. Hamm** stated that he anticipates that brush depository expenses will increase, that is a county contract.

**Mr. Galtere** asked how employee related expenses are tracked between different jobs in the department. **Ms. Savage** explained that they note on their timesheets which job they're working on and it gets allocated to the proper line item. **Mr. Hamm** and **Mr. Galtere** discussed how work gets assigned, specifically at the Reading Country Club.

**Mr. Speece** inquired about the excess expenses in building maintenance. **Mr. Hamm** replied that there were significantly more HVAC expenses for the Township building this year than anticipated, the system keeps breaking. **Ms. Savage** stated that the library HVAC replacement is also allocated there.

**Mr. Hamm** reviewed the park maintenance and improvement projects that the Highway Department completed this year. Discussed plans for future improvements to be done at Pineland Park, Mountain Park, and Farming Ridge. Reviewed other planned 2021 projects for crack sealing and MS4.

**Mr. Galtere** asked about costs associated with building maintenance for the library, thought it was said that not much is spent there. **Ms. Savage** and **Mr. Hamm** replied indicating that they were referring to the labor at the library. There is hardly any related to that, but there are other costs.

**Mr. Piersol** reviewed his budget presentation. Discussed highlights of accomplishments in 2020, and goals for 2021. Reviewed 2020 purchases, and planned purchases for 2021. Would like to replace several older fleet vehicles and pieces of equipment to be purchased out of the equipment fund.

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**Mr. Staub** asked about the paver purchase cost compared to contracting out. **Mr. Piersol** replied that the paver costs about \$350,000. **Ms. Savage** stated that the cost to contract was about \$50,000 this year. **Mr. Hamm** stated that was not all the paving that we did. That was just a portion. **Ms. Getz** reviewed the Parks & Recreation Department budget presentation, a copy of the presentation is attached to the minutes.

**Ms. Getz** reviewed personnel, discussed that a goal is to hire a Recreation Program Coordinator. Discussed 2020 highlights and parks improvement accomplishments. Reviewed 2021 goals which include administrative goals as well as park improvements and seeking grant funding

Reviewed revenue, explained that revenue was substantially down in 2020 due to things being cancelled and facilities closed due to COVID-19. **Mr. Galtere** asked what is included in the Parks & Rec User Fee category and Youth Group Contributions. **Ms. Getz** explained that Parks & Rec User Fees encompasses the summer playground program, and Youth Group Contributions is for sports field rentals.

Discussion on the fee schedule, **Mr. Staub** stated that he would like to see the fees revisited and consider not charging youth groups within the Township. **Mr. Galtere** agreed, **Mr. Cusatis** pointed out that it's still important to cover costs. **Mr. Speece** agreed that it should be revisited.

**Ms. Getz** stated that she plans to review the fee schedule and will present it to the Board at a future meeting.

**Mr. Cusatis** asked how we can get Parks & Recreation to be cost-neutral, and not involve tax dollars. **Ms. Savage** and **Ms. Getz** explained that reaching cost-neutral status for this department is not feasible, in large part due to the cost of staff. **Ms. Getz** explained that Parks are a service provided by the government to the community, services are a justifiable use of tax dollars. **Ms. Getz** also pointed out that significant progress has been made on specific programs however that are now covering a higher percentage of costs than in the past.

Discussed Fall Fest and desire to have that event to be Exeter's signature event.

**Mr. Galtere** agreed that it's important to monitor expenses, but it is not a goal of his to be cost-neutral but rather focus on providing quality parks and recreation to the community.

**Ms. Getz** reviewed expenses; explained that while revenue was down for 2020, so were expenses. **Mr. Galtere** asked why the Parks & Rec admin was budgeted so much lower for 2020 compared to 2018 and 2019. **Ms. Savage** replied that she will investigate and report back.

Reviewed the Park Fund, explained that we did not receive grant funding that we had hoped for two years in a row. Would like to move forward with improvements utilizing the Park Fund, as the repairs and improvements are in high need. Reviewed prioritized list of improvements to be completed over the next three years spread across Pineland Park, Farming Ridge, Lorane Hollow, and Mountain Park.

**Mr. Staub** asked if the pickleball courts at Farming Ridge will be done. **Ms. Getz** responded that the tennis/pickleball courts are a 2022 priority, but depending on the quote amount it could get done sooner if the budget permits.

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Reviewed Park Fund, pointed out that 2020 budget anticipated receiving large amount of grant funding that was not received. Budgeted for 2021 assuming not receiving grants, but will continue to apply.

Discussion on parks staffing, and the shortage our parks have seen in staffing and budget for many years.

**Mr. Galtere** asked what's in the budget for staff. **Ms. Savage** responded that two full time staff are included, as well as 2 dedicated summer seasonal maintenance staff. **Mr. Galtere** asked if that is sufficient. Discussion on that being a good start, will revisit each year.

Discussion on long term funding sources for the parks. **Ms. Getz** explained that the park fund in the past had been funded primarily by lot fees from new residential construction, but that has largely dried up. Long term funding plans will need to be developed.

**Ms. Savage** explained that a \$1.2M investment into the park fund was made from the wastewater proceeds to allow for projects and grant matching.

**Ms. Getz** reviewed the 2021 Communications Department budget presentation. A copy of the presentation is attached to these minutes.

Explained that transitioning from a print newsletter to an electronic version with limited mailings saves about \$15,000 per year.

**Mr. Galtere** discussed the electronic marquis sign that we would like to acquire and install on 422 where the current library sign is. Would like to see that expense added into the budget. **Ms. Savage** stated that she would work that into the capital budget.

Discussed advertising opportunities for the sign, **Mr. Staub** will obtain a copy of the school district's advertising policy and share it with the administration.

**Mr. Brugger** presented the Engineering Department's budget. A copy of the presentation is attached to these minutes.

Reviewed departmental makeup and personnel and 2020 highlights. Department saw an increase in permit revenue in 2020 due to home improvement projects and pool installations. Updated GIS program and worked on Perkiomen Avenue streetscape project.

**Mr. Speece** asked about the cost benefits to outsourcing some building code inspections versus bringing in house. **Mr. Brugger** explained that at this point there is not an immediate plan to bring that in house, but it is a long-term plan as one of the current employees is training to take on more of those roles.

**Mr. Brugger** reviewed the 2021 departmental goals. Will be working on the second access to Trout Run. Proposing additional GIS support with a contractor, as well as the creation of a new position of Fire Code Inspector/Fire Marshall to replace Sgt. Bentz who desires to relinquish the Assistant Fire Marshall duties. Discussed permitting software, proposing updated software. Would like to work on digitizing files, including in the budget money for a person to work on this project.

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Reviewed Engineering Department revenues, explained that the department is not currently self-sufficient but it is a goal.

**Mr. Staub** asked why the 2021 projection is lower than what was projected in 2020. **Mr. Brugger** replied that it is difficult to predict development. **Ms. Savage** explained that they take a conservative approach so that revenue is not based on what are sometimes one-time sources.

**Mr. Speece** asked about the plumbing/mechanical/electric permit revenue. **Ms. Savage** responded that the revenue was from home renovation projects.

**Mr. Brugger** reviewed the departmental expenses.

**Mr. Staub** asked about the projected cost of the new employee that Mr. Brugger mentioned for the fire marshall. **Mr. Brugger** replied that the person may begin as a contractor.

**Ms. Savage** explained that the next budget presentations will take place on November 2<sup>nd</sup>.

**PUBLIC COMMENT – General Comments**

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**David Hughes;** Commented on 2019 and 2020 budgets. Stated that neither have been reviewed by the public. Feels the Township did not adhere to the 2020 budget, thinks COVID has had a serious impact. Doesn't feel any spending has been delayed, and that the Township continues to dip into sewer proceeds.

**Ms. Savage** responded that the 2019 and 2020 budgets are available. Year to date spending is also reviewed each month at a public meeting in the form of the Treasurer's Report. Explained that the COVID impacts on revenues have been tracking much better than anticipated, revenue and expenses are on track for this time of year. Also explained that no money has been spent out of the sewer proceeds with the exception of Board approved payment of the sewer debt for the 2007 bond that was not callable at the time of the sale.

**ADJOURNMENT**

**MOTION** of Mr. Cusatis, seconded by Mr. Galtere, the meeting adjourned at 8:06 PM.

Respectfully Submitted,

Laurie Getz  
Township Secretary