

***MINUTES FOR THE THIRD IN A SERIES OF 2014 BUDGET MEETINGS HELD BY THE EXETER TOWNSHIP BOARD OF SUPERVISORS ON OCTOBER 24, 2013***

A 2014 Budget Meeting of the Exeter Township Board of Supervisors was called to order on Thursday, October 24, 2013, at 7:00 P.M. in the Township Building by Chairman Donald R. Wilson.

The purpose of the meeting was to review the Fire Police; Police; Fund 04; and the Reading Country Club Food & Beverage, Golf and Capital Needs proposed budgets for 2014.

**Supervisors Present:** Donald R. Wilson, Chairman  
Kenneth A. Smith, Vice Chairman  
Dona L. Starr  
Gary E. Lloyd  
Jeff Bukowski

**Others in Attendance:**  
Troy S. Bingaman, Township Manager/Secretary/Treasurer  
Carol I. Leinbach, Finance Manager  
Christopher L. Neidert, Chief of Police  
Norman Willig, Fire Police Captain  
Jeffrey Rutter, Chef Alan, Food & Beverage, Reading Country Club  
Alan Rutter, Chef Alan, Food & Beverage, Reading Country Club  
Tom Morgan, A&M Golf, Reading Country Club  
Brian Ahrens, A&M Golf, Reading Country Club

**Pledge of Allegiance**

The Meeting was opened with the recitation of the Pledge of Allegiance.

**Fire Police Proposed 2014 Budget**

Mr. Willig stated in each previous year he tried not to spend money; however, this year might be a little tight. The proposed Fire Police budget totaled \$47,680.34. He stated \$4,000 of that amount was being budgeted for the On Spot Self Contained Automatic Tire Chain System for which brackets would be needed if the existing chain system could be used. He stated \$17,100 was budgeted for a Command Tower Light which is used on the scene so visibility is clear and to provide protection for a Fire Police Officer directing traffic at the scene. The Light is also used for Township events like the Hayride. Mr. Smith suggested the Command Tower Light be a part of the Capital Expenditure Budget, which is Fund 18. Mr. Bingaman agreed. The Board had no further concerns with the Fire Police Budget.

**Police Proposed 2014 Budget**

Chief Neidert reviewed the changes in the 2013 budget that included the reduction of one officer who retired and was not replaced, and the reduction of one secretarial staff person from full time to half time. He stated the officer that retired was a DARE program officer and not refilling his position, in conjunction with the lack of funding, has resulted in the elimination of the DARE program. He stated the department now has three less officers for a total of 29. As a result he has eliminated traffic safety officer duty and has moved the officer who had that duty to the patrol squad.

Chief Neidert stated he has reduced the amount of overtime, the amount of truck enforcement details, has eliminated child car safety seat checks, and fire arms training is done on duty time. He noted detectives cover patrol duty while the officers are on the firing range. He stated this year he received a check from the William Penn Foundation for \$92,000 making the total received since 2005 of \$650,000 which has been used to purchase equipment. He noted one third of the department's fleet cars have been purchased with William Penn Foundation monies. Chief Neidert stated on the income side 50% of ballistic vest costs were paid through the Ballistic Vest Grant. He noted 21 vests needed replacement this year because 10 years ago the vests manufactured were faulty, were returned and replaced by the company. He suggested budgeting \$2,000 each year to cover the replacement of all 21 vests that he knew would be needed in 5 years. With regards to overtime, Chief Neidert stated the reduction in overtime was due to not having enough manpower as 8 officers were out throughout the year. He requested police holiday overtime be separated in the budget from regular overtime to have a clearer picture of how overtime is spent. He stated office expenses are minimal and he detailed other items on the budget including the cost of ammunition. He noted the \$2,500 grant received in 2013 would be used to reduce the K9 budget. He noted many donations had been received from members of the community that would be used for vet and food bills. Mr. Lloyd asked how many days a month were spent on K9 training to which Chief Neidert replied two days. Chief Neidert also stated he planned to eliminate one K9 by 2015 when K9 Bosco retired.

Chief Neidert stated municipal officers can't use radar according to PA law and that was frustrating. He detailed other items in the budget. He stated he was expecting more mileage out of the new V-6 cars. He noted some cars die out at 90,000 miles and some made it to 110,000 miles. He stated having police cars repaired by Township crews has saved a lot of money. Mr. Lloyd asked about the sources of money for the swat unit to which Chief Neidert stated 50% came from Berks County, the remainder came from the municipalities of the officers assigned to the unit; and, there were donations from other police departments. Chief Neidert explained the value of the swat team. There was a general discussion on budgeted items including the swat team, computer operations, computer purchases, licenses, anticipated expenses and the radio system budgeted items. Chief Neidert stated when the conversion to the new radio system occurs he will give all the narrow band radios to the Highway Department for use in their vehicles so they will be in compliance with FCC regulations. He also detailed the traffic citations and other criminal activity as they related to overtime for hearings and witness testimony. He stated criminal arrests and citations had increased. There was a discussion on how short term disability was paid and if there were ways to reduce those costs. Mr. Lloyd asked if there had been any discussions on regionalization to which Chief Neidert responded they were waiting for the results of a current study in local government at the Albright Center for Excellence because they were in the process of capturing everyone's expenses. He stated it would be wise to wait so as not to duplicate efforts. Mr. Lloyd asked about mutual aid between police forces to which Chief Neidert responded there is an understanding about helping each other in several departments as an informal mutual aid arrangement. Mr. Lloyd asked if the in-house firing range was being used; and, if not, could it be used for something else like storage. The Police Chief stated this was an excellent asset and he was not interested in giving it up. Mr. Lloyd asked how much time and what the cost in salaries were being spent on accreditation. Chief Neidert stated approximately 100 or 200 hours would be spent on maintenance to include policy review, training, all the administrative items and protecting the department from liability.

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Mr. Bukowski felt it was not fair to call this an extra cost as it was part of the job to be using best practices; and, was a feather in the cap of the entire police force. The Police Chief stated it was important to have that seal of accreditation when involved in court cases. There was a discussion on replacing an officer and Mr. Bingaman noted hiring another officer was reflected in the 2014 budget. Mr. Wilson stated he was concerned about being down one officer and wanted to make sure hiring an officer was in the future. *Tom Howell*, P.O. Box 4635, asked how many officers would be of retirement age between now and 2017 to which the response was six.

Mr. Bingaman asked if the Board could resolve the Santa escort issue. The Police Chief stated he had a conversation with the individual that plays Santa and it was evident a police escort would be prudent. Mr. Bingaman stated he estimated the cost to be \$1,500. Mr. Bukowski, Mrs. Starr and Mr. Wilson felt it would be okay and Mr. Lloyd asked more questions about it. Mr. Bingaman answered Mr. Bukowski's question about what portion of the budget the police expense was stating it was 53.7% of the overall budget.

#### *Reading Country Club Food & Beverage Proposed 2014 Budget*

Jeffrey Rutter, from Chef Alan, stated banquet bookings started off slowly in 2013; however, bookings were catching up quickly. He estimated income could be off by about \$10,000 to \$20,000; but, he did not yet have the final figure and bookings continued to come in. He stated 2014 looked more positive and the service charges help maintain a good profit level.

Mr. Smith asked how the patio worked to which Mr. Rutter stated he felt it was going well and there was an increase in business. Mr. Bingaman asked about contract services as the numbers appeared to be doubled for next year and back in line thereafter. Mr. Rutter explained the computer systems caused some numbers to move and he would look into it. Mr. Bingaman stated the Township contracted for lower electric rates in 2014 and that would benefit Mr. Rutter's budget. Mr. Bukowski asked where they expected to be at the end of the year to which Mr. Rutter projected to be \$340,000. Mr. Lloyd asked what should be expected for an operation like that at the country club to which Mr. Rutter stated maintaining and going higher. Mr. Lloyd asked what could improve the bottom line to which Mr. Rutter stated booking more weddings as they supported the facility. He stated some of the banquet business could be increased by changing the configuration of the men's locker room to make another banquet room. Mr. Bingaman asked if different types of marketing were being considered. Mr. Rutter explained what was being done and what was being considered. There was a brief discussion on the various budgeted improvements listed on the budget request list for 2013-2018. Among the items discussed by Mr. Rutter were the broiler/oven replacement; the transfer of the tilt kettle from Chef Alan's other location and the amount of money needed for installation; the halfway house drop ceiling replacement before spring; the main entrance canopy quote; work needed on the face of the main bar; hood system upgrades in the main and banquet areas; and the walk-in freezer scheduled for purchase in 2014. There was a brief discussion on replacing the walls near the herb garden with stone. Mr. Lloyd stated one suggestion from PEL was the need for an annual written marketing plan. Mr. Rutter stated marketing changed by the week due to the flexibility of the bookings and a general plan could be written. Mr. Lloyd stated the benefits of a marketing plan and suggested this be done. Mr. Wilson asked if rebranding the country club could help. There was a brief discussion about whether or not people think this is still a private club and don't use it because of that. Mr. Rutter stated people planning weddings like the country club designation. Mrs. Starr suggested checking into whether free time use for advertising on the bill board was still available.

Mr. Bingaman stated Dave Peacock, with Lamar Advertising, was the contact person and he would forward the information to both Alan and Jeffrey Rutter. Mr. Bukowski asked how Mr. Rutter felt about a second entrance to which he responded access was always a good thing for the restaurant; but, there were parking issues to consider. Mr. Smith asked if they got much take out business to which Alan Rutter stated stopping at the building for pick-ups happens now. Mr. Bukowski stated the contract was coming up and asked Mr. Rutter to review it and make suggestions for discussion.

#### **Reading Country Club Golf Budget Proposals for 2014**

Tom Morgan stated golf did not have a great start in 2013 and revenues were down from \$24,529 to \$20,580 due to the weather. He has seen an increase in business in August, September and October, and a profit has been projected for the year. The proposed 2014 budget includes an increase in greens fees, except for juniors, from \$30 to \$35 for residents; from \$40 to \$45 for non-residents; and on the weekend, fees would be increased to \$50 for a resident and \$60 for a non-resident. On the lease for carts, \$55,000 is owed year and the income from renting carts was \$100,000 a year. Mr. Ahrens stated after the year in which the carts would be paid off, the goal would be to begin switching them out at 10, 15, or 20 at a time. He stated cart maintenance costs were due to slight damage from minor accidents. Mr. Morgan stated the lease on the carts was up a year after they bought the business and then carts were bought outright. He asked questions about selling the carts when they got old and Mr. Bingaman discussed the municibid process. Mr. Morgan stated the membership levels had changed and he got 40 new members. He felt membership would be between 95 and 105 for the year. There was a discussion on membership pricing. Mr. Morgan stated Galen Hall had been losing members due to the condition of the course and it might be good for Reading Country Club. Mr. Ahrens stated they were gaining more members than they were losing at this time. Mr. Morgan stated the improvement in the greens was the draw for members. Mr. Lloyd asked how many rounds of golf were played last year and how many were projected for 2013. Mr. Morgan responded in 2012 - 24,529 rounds were played; and in 2013 year to date there have been 20,580 rounds and he expected about 21,000+ rounds by the end of the year. There was a discussion on the impact of weather on the business.

#### **Reading Country Club Golf Proposed Capital Needs for 2014**

There was a discussion on the Capital Needs proposed budget. Mr. Ahrens proposed moving the money that was not spent in 2013 to the 2014 budget to move the 13<sup>th</sup> tee and address some tree issues near the highway. He noted out of the \$27,000 budgeted for 2013, only about \$5,000 had been spent. Details about how to stop some of the balls going onto Route 422 were discussed. It costs \$1,700 to move the tee, \$1,200 worth of rooting mix to cap the tee and the irrigation system would have to be moved for about \$300. Mr. Ahrens stated it was necessary to show the problem was being addressed and he felt using a net would not be feasible. Mr. Ahrens noted the pressure maintenance pump for the irrigation system was not installed last year due to the initial slow start in 2013 and there was a discussion of bridge repairs. Mr. Lloyd asked about the projections on the number of rounds to which Mr. Morgan stated 22,000 was a good number. Mr. Morgan stated they had success in maintaining customers and the most difficulty was getting them there in the first place. He stated the economy has had an impact on income. There was a brief discussion on the marketing plan. Mr. Lloyd felt more profit should be made than is being made.

Mr. Smith reminded Mr. Lloyd of the reasons the Country Club was purchased. Mr. Ahrens explained the conditions of the takeover, the prices are under the market and trying to get them where they should be will take time or customers would be lost. He felt in six years they would be looking at a six digit profit. Mr. Smith stated the consensus of the Board was that raising the green fees was the right thing to do. Mr. Ahrens stated the projects that need to be done can be done with monies from the previous year and the irrigation system project could be carried over. Mr. Ahrens explained the importance of the changes in the system. It was noted that tree replacement was on track. Mr. Bingaman asked the status of the four remaining trees that would be replaced in later years to which Mr. Ahrens stated the cost was \$1,500 each for a total of \$6,000 and a contract extension would be needed. Mr. Bingaman asked if they had an inventory of all the equipment and a schedule of what had to be replaced. Mr. Ahrens felt as long as the equipment was being maintained they would be okay and he did not keep a schedule.

Mr. Howell stated he had previously suggested a 200 foot marker be placed on the course. Mr. Ahrens stated a 200 foot marker would take them off the fairway and perhaps a 175 foot marker would work.

#### Planner Discussion

There was a brief discussion on the procedures needed after the planner was chosen with Mr. Bukowski asking what direction the Board wanted to take. Mr. Wilson stated the planner chosen should provide the direction.

#### ADJOURNMENT

**MOTION** by Mrs. Starr, seconded by Mr. Lloyd, to adjourn the meeting. Motion carried unanimously. The meeting adjourned at 9:37 P.M.

Respectfully Submitted



Troy S. Bingaman  
Township Secretary

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