

HILLTOWN TOWNSHIP BOARD OF SUPERVISORS
2021 WORK SESSION BUDGET MEETING
TUESDAY, OCTOBER 20, 2020
4:00 PM

The advertised 2021 Work Session Budget meeting of the Hilltown Township Board of Supervisors was called to order by Chairman John B. McIlhinney at 4:00 PM and opened with the Pledge of Allegiance. Also in attendance were Vice- Chairman James Groff, Supervisor Caleb Torrice, Township Manager Lorraine Leslie, Chief of Police Christopher Engelhart, and Finance Director, Marianne Egan.

2. PUBLIC COMMENT ON AGENDA ITEMS ONLY: None.

3. YEAR 2021 PROPOSED BUDGET – DISCUSSION/QUESTIONS/COMMENTS:
Township Manager, Lorraine Leslie, stated there will be no tax increase anticipated for 2021 which will be the 10th year in a row with no tax increase. Ms. Leslie noted the following budget items:

General Fund - Revenue

Real Estate taxes are budgeted with a slight increase primarily because the development of Regency located on Route 113 should be complete in 2021.

Earned Income Tax, Local Services Tax and Amusement Taxes are all budgeted down because of the expected downturn in revenue.

Vehicle code violations and ordinance violations are also budgeted down because at the 75% portion of the year, these categories are only at 50% of what was budgeted for 2020.

Interest is budgeted down in all categories.

Building permits are budgeted down because there is not anything of decent size for next year.

Expenditures

Medical, prescription and dental are budgeted with a 10% increase. The rates for 2021 from Delaware Valley Health Trust just came in with an 8.99% increase in prescription and 1.02% increase in medical.

The Public Works Department as well as the Police Department have 3 ½ % increases for 2021 per their contract.

Small reductions were made in motor fuel and heating oil because those categories were down. \$165,000.00 has been maintained in the road materials category to keep up with the paving.

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Fire Fund

The fire tax is currently at .75 mills.

The three (3) year review shows \$872,000.00 that was distributed to the seven (7) fire companies over the course of three years.

Park and Recreation Fund

This fund includes \$1,500.00 for the Pennridge Senior Center and \$14,000.00 for a replacement mower.

Street Lighting Fund

This fund is the same. We only bill what we pay.

Capital Projects Fund

\$5,275.00 has been added for a replacement computer for the Administration. Also included is \$50,000.00 for the Township Building in the event that the oil burner or emergency generator have to be replaced. This equipment is now 31 years old.

Items have not been added for the Police Department pending discussions with the Board of Supervisors.

Recreation Capital Reserve

A replacement playground set at the Civic Park has been budgeted for \$160,000.00. The current equipment was installed in 1993 and this playground set will be handicapped accessible. All Supervisors agreed with the purchase of the new playground set. It was noted it will be purchased through Co-Stars.

\$480,000.00 has been budgeted for the installation of the pedestrian path.

Open Space Fund

Nothing is budgeted because, right now, there is nothing to purchase.

Stormwater System Reserve Fund

Repairs to Stormwater systems is budgeted for the items that were not completed in 2020. Currently the items are on hold because of Bog Turtles.

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Road Equipment Fund

This budget includes the replacement of one dump truck at approximately \$193,000.00 and a replacement pick-up truck at a cost of \$55,000.00. Ms. Leslie stated, if the budget goes through, they may be able to order these items through Co-Stars now.

State Highway Aid Fund

The Township uses what the State provides, adds \$165,000.00, and paves as many roads that they can.

Operating Reserve Fund

The Operating Fund is a budget item. It does not have anything added to it except interest. It cannot be used for anything other than the deferral of tax increases or emergencies and, per the Second-Class Township Code, is limited to 25% of the total budget. It can only be spent by motion of the Board of Supervisors.

Chairman McIlhinney emphasized the fact that Hilltown Township has Zero debt, because, other Townships claim zero debt but do not talk about their 40-million-dollar bond issue.

Chief Engelhart discussed the Police Department's Capital Budget requests consisting of the following:

1. Patrol Vehicles – Two vehicles are being requested for next year either being two Tahoe's or one Tahoe and one Charger being a pursuit vehicle. After discussion on safety, reliability, and being an all-around vehicle, all of the Supervisors agree that Tahoe's are better vehicles for the Police to be using. It was noted the mileage policy on Police vehicles is 120,000 miles.
2. Mobile Video Recorder (MVR) System – Two MVR Systems are being requested for next year for a total of \$13,000.00. All eight of the patrol vehicles will be equipped with cameras.
3. Body Warn Cameras – Two body warn cameras in the total amount of \$2,200.00 is requested. There are currently 8,500 videos in storage. Chairman McIlhinney asked, if after the purchase of 2 additional cameras, will all of the officers have a camera. Chief Engelhart stated he was planning the possibility of having to get new ones because they are going from officer to officer and they get beat up. After discussion, the Board of Supervisors agreed if there are fourteen officers on the road, then there should be fourteen body cameras. Chief Engelhart stated it would be approximately \$10,000.00 to buy an additional docking station and 7 additional body warn cameras (with one spare camera). The Board of Supervisors agreed to the purchase.
4. Tasers – An additional purchase of two tasers is requested. Chief Englehart discussed the inventory and five-year cycle of the tasers. The Board of Supervisors agreed that every police

officer should have a taser and agreed to the purchase of approximately 6 total tasers. It was noted there is ample area to secure the tasers.

5. Computers and Related – 4 desktop computers (two from this year), patrol laptop computer, primary server, and a surveillance system DVR is requested. Chief Engelhart stated the desktop computers and the patrol laptop computer has Windows 7 issues. The IT Tech recommended a new server (for the in-house computers), and the surveillance system needs to be updated, which is five years old. The Board of Supervisors agreed with the computers and related items.

6. Unmanned Aerial System (UAS or Drone) – Chief Engelhart stated, with the purchase of additional body worn cameras, he would defer the drone until next year. He continued to state a drone is almost mandatory for major crash/crime scene investigations. Chairman McIlhinney stated at the yard waste recycle program, there were pictures, videos, and license plates showing people illegally dropping things off, and were told by the DA, and Chief Engelhart, that it was not good enough and they cannot pursue anybody based on the information that was gathered. So why should someone be pursued based on a drone picture? Chief Engelhart stated he is talking about different things; the drone would be used at a crime scene that they are investigating and documenting the scene from overhead. Chief Engelhart stated he is looking into a non-compensatory lease agreement with a police officer to use his drone. He is trying to work out the logistics with DVIT and the officer's private insurance company.

7. Police Department Remodel Project – The conference room and reception area remodel is deferred from this year but, Chief Engelhart stated he would like the conference room to possibly be done by the Public Works Department this year in the amount of approximately \$6,000.00. Ms. Leslie stated it would have to be done in the winter. The Board of Supervisors stated getting the \$6,000.00 conference room remodeled could be done by the end of the year and rest of it may have to wait to see how the year goes.

8. Portable Breath Testers – Two portable breath testers are being requested in order to replace the older units. The Board of Supervisors agreed to the request.

9. Inkless Fingerprint System – Chief Engelhart stated they get fingerprint requests on a daily basis for residents in regard to employment and security requests. They do not charge for the request. Discussion occurred on whether or not to charge someone for this service but it was concluded to continue this service to the residents of Hilltown free of charge and agreed to the Inkless Fingerprint System.

10. Additional Officer Hire – Chief Engelhart stated he, again, is requesting authorization to add an additional officer to assist in patrol activities and investigative activities. Supervisor Torrice asked the complete cost of a new officer. Ms. Leslie stated starting salary is \$73,410.00, benefits can be as much as \$40,000.00, and uniforms, etc. can bring it up to \$150,000.00 to \$160,000.00

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through the door. Chairman McIlhinney and Vice Chairman Groff stated they cannot see doing that right now. Supervisor Torrice stated he likes the idea of Community Policing but it is a huge expense.

11. Administrative Staffing – Chief Engelhart stated, due to the early retirement of an administrative assistant, he requests a full-time position to assist in the management of the Evidence Room and assist with the state accreditation process. At a minimum he asks for a part-time employee to fill the position. Chairman McIlhinney stated he thought the new software was supposed to make the Department more efficient and operate with less personnel; not increased personnel. Chief Engelhart stated they are not increasing personnel; just be staying where they were. The concept was to roll that position into something that is going to help with the electronic evidence management. Discussion occurred on the procedure of processing evidence and it was noted a civilian can do the job as long as they have clearance. Supervisor Torrice asked if overtime has been paid since the employee retired. Chief Engelhart confirmed overtime has been paid and sees it continuing without having additional help. Chief Engelhart stated it is not ideal to have someone part-time handling evidence. Ms. Leslie stated she would like to get all of the items in the budget and see where they are. Chairman McIlhinney stated if they are going to invest heavily in equipment, there has got to be a payoff for the taxpayers of the Township and not just continue throwing out the old equipment every five years and bring in more equipment; there seems to be no benefit other than the manufacturers making the equipment. Chief Engelhart stated the benefit to the Police Department is being able to be a professional Police Department and have the proper equipment and technology available to them to make them more efficient. In regard to part-time employees, Chief Engelhart stated some local municipalities have used college graduates or retired police officers who have experience. Ms. Leslie stated a part-time person has to be covered under the pension plan and covered under worker's compensation. Chief Engelhart stated his inclination is no to an additional employee. Vice-Chairman Groff stated changes have been made in the budget and they need to know where everything stands after the changes are made.

12. Accreditation – Chief Engelhart stated, as last year, he is again asking for funding which seems to be the general trend for agencies, especially with the issues that have been occurring with law enforcement. He can foresee that it will be a requirement at some point for Police Departments. It is a long-term commitment running approximately \$15,000.00 – \$17,000.00 over the next three years to be able to get it to work. He continued to state he does not know if that would cover it all. It would depend what they would need to do in some cases because there are infrastructure requirements along with policy requirements. Chairman McIlhinney stated the answer they gave last year was “No” because it is so open ended and nobody can pin anything on anything. There is no definite number, and it serves no purpose that he can see other than what has been in the papers about the Federal Government instituting programs all around the Country and through the

bureaucracy telling you what you have to do and what you can't do, and then, ten years later, people find out what it is all about. Chief Engelhart stated it certainly has developed into a business, there is no doubt. There are businesses that have been created, whether they are law enforcement or retirees, creating businesses doing accreditations for agencies. But, at the same time, they are being created by the State. Chairman McIlhinney stated it is like the Fire Companies. It used to be 15 hours of training and now it is 200 hours of training and they question why they cannot find any volunteers. Chairman McIlhinney stated "No" to the accreditation. Vice-Chairman Groff also stated "No" to the accreditation. Chief Engelhart stated it is saying that you are doing the best practices in the field. They come in every three years to verify that you are doing that. Copies of certain documents are needed to be put into files to show that certain things are being done and not doing other things. When the accreditation comes in, the building is inspected, and files are shown to confirm everything is being done that was supposed to be done professionally. Chief Engelhart stated they are not doing all of those standards at the present time, it will create more work, and he hoped a part-time/full-time employee would help with that aspect. Supervisor Torrice questioned if there is any cost savings with insurance. Chief Engelhart stated there is not any savings in regards to insurance. DVIT encourages it but they do not give any benefit. Chief Engelhart continued to state, in regard to building fire protection, the pull stations are not working. It worked until the current system shut down. Chief Engelhart stated the JAMAR StarNext Software, the traffic recorder, is still operational and will wait to upgrade the software next year. Ms. Leslie stated she will get together with Chris to review numbers. The budget needs to be advertised for twenty days and corrections can be made within that time. Ms. Leslie stated she will advertise the budget for adoption on November 23, 2020. Supervisor Torrice questioned sick time buyback, longevity, and the Planning/Zoning line item. Ms. Leslie stated sick time buyback is an incentive not to blow through sick time. The employee has to have 160 hours to sell back a maximum of 80 hours. Remaining sick time carries over along with a 96-hour allotment for the following year. Longevity is a one-time payment a year based on years of service starting out at \$1,400.00 and goes up by \$150.00 per year starting at five years employment. The Planning/Zoning line item contains the Zoning Officer, and two administrative assistants. Supervisor Caleb confirmed there is one Lieutenant, four Sergeants, one Detective, and the remaining are Officers.

Motion was made by Vice-Chairman Groff, seconded by Supervisor Torrice and carried unanimously to authorize the advertisement of the 2021 Hilltown Township Proposed Budget for adoption on November 23, 2020. There was no public comment.

4. PUBLIC COMMENT: None.

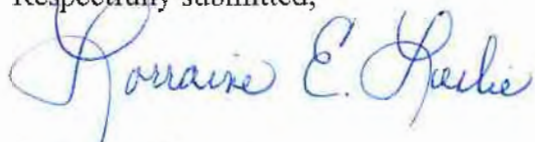
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5. SUPERVISOR'S COMMENTS: None.
6. PRESS CONFERENCE: None.
7. ADJOURNMENT: Upon motion by Supervisor Torrice, seconded by Vice-Chairman Groff and carried unanimously, the 2021 Budget Work Session Meeting was adjourned at 5:17 PM.

Respectfully submitted,



Lorraine E. Leslie

Township Manager/Secretary

(*NOTE: These minutes were transcribed from notes and recordings and should not be considered official until approved by the Board of Supervisors at a public meeting).