

**SOUTH STRABANE TOWNSHIP
BOARD OF SUPERVISORS BUDGET MEETING**

October 19, 2020

APPROVED MEETING MINUTES

1. CALL TO ORDER

The October 19, 2020 Budget Meeting of the South Strabane Township Board of Supervisors (Board) came to order at 6:00 p.m. in the Mae C. Reynolds Meeting Room of the Municipal Building (550 Washington Road).

The following were present:

Board of Supervisors Thomas Moore, Chairman, Rich Luketich, Vice Chairman; Bracken Burns; and Bob Weber.

Also Present Township Manager Brandon Stanick; Assistant to the Township Manager Patrick Conners; Police Chief Drew Hilk; Fire Chief Scott Reese; Public Safety Director Jim Barnes; Code Enforcement Officer Scott Heckman; and Financial Analyst Marie Coffman

No visitors were in attendance.

2. PUBLIC COMMENT

Chair Moore stated the Board allocates a period of time during this item for those individuals who would like the opportunity to address the Board on any matter. Each person addressing the Board is asked to limit their comments to a maximum of three (3) minutes.

There were no public comments.

3. REVIEW OF PROJECTED EXPENDITURES: CODE ENFORCEMENT, FIRE, AND POLICE

Public Safety Director Barnes came before the Board to outline the projected expenditures for Code Enforcement and Building Departments. Township Manager Stanick noted that the 2006 Ford Explorer currently used by Code Enforcement Officer Heckman would be retired in the coming year. He highlighted that Mr. Heckman would be issued a Ford Taurus previously used by the Police Department. A discussion on the Township's vehicle inventory ensued. Mr. Weber inquired regarding continuing education for the Code Enforcement/Building Code Departments. Public Safety Director Barnes reported that in-person instruction has been limited due to the COVID-19 pandemic. He highlighted that both he and Code Enforcement Officer Heckman have webinars scheduled on the topics of playground inspection, zoning, and stormwater infrastructure inspection.

Township Manager Stanick noted the Washington Mall Planning Study that was first discussed in 2019, in the amount of \$45,000, is programmed for 2021. Mr. Burns inquired regarding the communication between the current property owner(s) and the Township. Township Manager Stanick reported that he routinely speaks with the legal representative of the property owners. Mr. Burns expressed his desire to see further communication between the Township and the property owners prior to engaging in a study. Mr. Luketich and Mr. Weber highlighted their concerns regarding the cost of the analysis. It was the consensus of the Board to not pursue the study in 2021.

A discussion ensued regarding Animal Control Services. Assistant to the Township Manager Conners and Code Enforcement Officer Heckman illustrated a new Geographic Information System (GIS) layer currently used for Code Enforcement operations. Assistant to the Township Manager Conners briefly discussed the utility of the GIS tool, highlighting that it has been used for several Township projects over the last year. Code Enforcement Officer Heckman discussed the prior methods of tracking and filing code enforcement complaints, noting the various inefficiencies in the workflow and process. Assistant to the Township Manager Conners stated the Township Engineer provided Staff with a quote to expand the capabilities of the GIS tool to include stormwater facility inspections and routine letter/correspondence generation to increase efficiencies within the Department. Township Manager Stanick highlighted the value in streamlining the stormwater facility inspections, which are a requirement of the Township's MS4 permit and a component the Township is required to perform. It was the consensus of the Board to move forward with the project in 2021.

Fire Chief Reese began his discussion by outlining various expenditures anticipated for the Fire Department in 2021 noting the need to purchase updated portable radios and essential equipment for the career firefighters. He also discussed the need to replace Rescue 442 which is the most frequently used vehicle in the Fire Department's fleet. A discussion ensued regarding funding/purchasing methods for a replacement vehicle. Fire Chief Reese noted that a 2016 apparatus is being put up for sale by the Slovan Volunteer Fire Department. He noted that he will be meeting with members of the South Strabane Volunteer Fire Department to inspect the vehicle. Mr. Luketich stated the Department should look to finance the new apparatus with a loan citing the low interest rates available in the current market. Fire Chief Reese noted the benefits of joint-ownership of equipment for the Township and Volunteer Fire Department citing the current experience with the recent brush truck purchase in 2019.

Fire Chief Reese then briefly discussed the Fire Department's insurance costs and obligations. A discussion regarding alternative insurance options ensued. He then discussed the pursuit of Federal grant opportunities through FEMA's Staffing for Adequate Fire and Emergency Response (SAFER) Program. He noted the program requires a commitment from the Township, highlighting funding assistance only occurs for a maximum of 3 years. He then highlighted his desire for professional assistance in continuing to apply for the SAFER Program. Mr. Weber expressed his support for 24/7 paid staffing for fire response in the Township. Township Manager Stanick noted the opportunity to levy revenue to expand career fire staffing through a dedicated fire tax. Mr.

Weber then inquired regarding fire hydrant inspections though Pennsylvania American Water. Township Manager Stanick and Chief Reese noted an opportunity to partner with neighboring communities to increase service response for the inspections. A discussion ensued regarding the matter.

Police Chief Hilk introduced new hire Officer Cody Kusluch, as well as Officer Nicholas Cichon that has successfully completed his probationary status. The Board welcomed and thanked both Officers for their service to the Community. Chief Hilk then invited Officer Keith Zenkovich to speak regarding the proposed K-9 Program. Officer Zenkovich thanked the Board for opportunity to work with a K-9 noting his previous experience with a similar Program while working for the City of Clairton Police Department. He discussed the training requirements of the Program noting the schedule that is required to maintain the K-9. A discussion regarding the breed and selection of the K-9 ensued. Chief Hilk noted that the Department completed the Application for the Ben Roethlisberger Foundation Grant which assists Police Departments in funding K-9 programs. He noted the Grant awards are announced periodically. A discussion regarding the necessary equipment and vehicle modifications to accommodate a K-9 ensued.

Next, Chief Hilk discussed the Department's overtime costs year-to-date. He noted overall costs are down from 2019, but noted recent challenges the Department has faced with injuries and sick leave which have contributed to a bump in overtime costs. Township Manager Stanick noted the correlation with the new hires in the Department and the decreased overtime costs from last year. Chief Hilk then discussed the budgetary request for civil unrest equipment, including helmets and body armor. He noted the Department does not have safety equipment should a major civil disruption occur within the Township. A discussion regarding the County's SWAT team ensued. Police Chief Hilk then highlighted the need to update the Department's Records Management System (RMS). He cited the current system was put in place over 20 years ago, but noted the system's infrastructure has not maintained the necessary adaptations to an increasingly mobile society. He outlined the costs for an updated RMS including a new server, firewall, and switch. He then noted the request for two Wireless Access Points (WAPs) to increase wireless internet coverage in the Police Station. The meeting concluded with brief discussions regarding the Drug Take Back Fund and available grants for the Police Department.

4. NEXT BUDGET MEETING

Township Manager Stanick reported the next Budget Meeting is scheduled for Wednesday, October 21st at 6:00 p.m.

5. ADJOURNMENT

Mr. Weber moved to adjourn the meeting. Mr. Luketich seconded the motion. The motion passed on a unanimous voice vote and the meeting adjourned at 8:50 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Brandon J. Stanick
Township Manager