

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

October 27, 2022

APPROVED MEETING MINUTES

1. CALL TO ORDER

The October 27, 2022 Budget Meeting of the South Strabane Township Board of Supervisors (“Board”) came to order at 6:00 p.m. in the Meeting Room of the Municipal Building (550 Washington Road, Washington, PA 15301).

The following were present:

Board of Supervisors	Bob Weber, Chair; Mark Murphy, Vice Chair; Bracken Burns; Russell Grego; and Richard Luketich.
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Absent	None
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Also Present	Township Manager Brandon Stanick; Assistant to the Township Manager Jim Sutter; Finance Director Janna Luton; and Police Chief Drew Hilk
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2. PUBLIC COMMENT

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 of Supervisors is asked to limit their comments to a maximum of three (3) minutes.

There were no comments from the Public.

3. REVIEW OF PROPOSED 2023 DEPARTMENT EXPENDITURES

Police Department

Police Chief Drew Hilk provided an overview of the proposed expenditures for the Police Department. Chief Hilk stated his request will largely carry over from the previous year with a minor increase in some items that have been outpacing inflation. He noted the Department never reaches the projected figure for uniforms, but he always budgets for unexpected attrition. Mr. Luketich asked how many damaged uniforms have needed replaced this year. Chief Hilk stated that none have to date. He noted he rarely receives requests to replace damaged uniforms. Chief Hilk stated a small increase in the request for minor equipment has been budgeted to reflect decreasing amounts received from a yearly grant from Wal-Mart.

Chief Hilk stated the line item for Professional Services is significantly increased due to records management maintenance costs. He stated the new system has allowed for the Department to have positive outcomes and would like to completely transition away from the old system before maintenance is discontinued. Mr. Murphy inquired of the specifics of the increased cost. Chief Hilk stated additional maintenance burdens, camera/plate readers, an improved copier and a new request he will go into more detail later are driving the increase.

Chief Hilk stated the line item for Police Exams is increasing, after there being no costs to date in 2022, as the current hiring list is expiring in the Spring. He stated an increase in communications is being requested due to anticipated growth, noting the proposed Menards Home Improvement store in the Old Mill Commercial Development. Chief Hilk stated that despite unanticipated increases in Fuel prices, the Department is still on pace for their budgeted amount and anticipates the costs will hold for next year. He stated Building Repair/Maintenance is increasing significantly due to the expected need for heavy repairs. Chief Hilk stated the line item for Dues, Subs, Memberships is holding.

Chief Hilk stated the vehicles are mostly newer, but has bumped up the request for Vehicle Maintenance in anticipation of additional maintenance needs as their miles increase. He stated the amount spent on Continuing Education exactly matches the amount budgeted for 2022 and he is requesting the same amount. Chief Hilk noted an increase in Drug and Alcohol processing due to a high number of DUI's. He stated some of the amount spent is reimbursed by the County, but it is not reliable and it is a lengthy process. As a result, a \$1,000 increase is requested for risk management purposes.

Chief Hilk noted, other than vehicle payments, the bulk of the request for capital covers the expense for body armor and ammunition. Mr. Luketich inquired on the status of old body armor. Chief Hilk stated it is not longer acceptable for field work per the manufacturer. He stated there has been a push to donate old armor to Ukraine, which he and other officers have done. Mr. Luketich raised the possibility of giving the old body armor to the Fire Department and stated it is Township property and should not be given away. Chief Hilk stated he would never recommend using old body armor in the field. Mr. Luketich noted the armor the Fire Department is looking into purchasing is not as protective as the armor the Police Department uses.

Mr. Luketich asked what the Police Department is doing with the old shotguns after the recent switch to rifles. Chief Hilk stated they have been converted into bean bag projectiles. A discussion on ammunition controls ensued. Mr. Luketich inquired if the converted shotguns still shoot shells. Chief Hilk stated they do, which is why the ammunition is under such tight controls. Mr. Luketich asked if the pistols are ever taken out of service. Chief Hilk stated they are not used long enough for this to occur. Mr. Luketich asked what is done with the pistols of officers who leave the Department. Chief Hilk stated they are offered to the individual at retail price and that money is put into the General Fund.

Mr. Grego noted the potential of liability if an officer is injured while not "on-the-clock" for the Township while wearing out-of-service body armor. He asked if the officers waive any liability when they come into possession of the out-of-service body armor. Township Manager Brandon Stanick stated there is a draft policy that addresses this. Chief Hilk noted the recently approved body armor policy does not address this and he will prepare an amendment to address this deficiency. A discussion ensued regarding body armor.

Chief Hilk stated there are a few payments for existing vehicles. He stated the proposed two new vehicles have already been purchased due to supply chain issues. Mr. Stanick noted if the Township does not want the new vehicles, they will be able to get out of the agreement as demand is so high. He stated the expense for the new vehicles is reflected in the Interfund Transfer line item in the amount of \$65,245. Chief Hilk stated he would also like to use money received from

the County Drug Forfeiture Fund to grow their current network of intersection cameras. He expressed a desire to cover the entire commercial retail district as there are currently gaps in the coverage and there will be more when the proposed Menards opens.

Chief Hilk noted the salaries of officers are set by the contract with the union. He requested a 5% raise for the Department's administrative clerk to account for inflation and her hard work. A discussion ensued on new K9 Reika. Chief Hilk stated he is requesting \$2,000 for continuing training for Reika and would like to purchase insurance as well to cover unforeseen circumstances. Chief Hilk stated Tractor Supply Company donates Reika's food upon a question from Mr. Grego.

Chief Hilk noted the next items are more significant requests. He distributed a proposed 2023 Organizational chart which includes an administrative Lieutenant. Chief Hilk stated Sergeants are often needed in the field which leaves only himself and the administrative clerk in the building. This limits his ability to work towards the Department reaching his long-term goal of receiving accreditation. He noted the new software request would go hand in hand with the Lieutenant and is something the Department should do even without creating this role. Chief Hilk stated the Lieutenant would serve as the Department's training manager, assist the Chief and serve as Officer-in-Charge in his absence. Chair Weber inquired on the current Officer-in-Charge when he is unavailable. Chief Hilk stated someone is always in charge of the patrol function, noting it is currently Officer Zenkovich. He stated when he is away from the Township, he appoints someone.

Chief Hilk stated the legacy costs would be more significant than the upfront costs in creating this role. He noted he has provided an overview of the command structures of our peer municipalities on the back of the proposed organizational structure to show this is a common approach. Upon a question from Chair Weber, Chief Hilk confirmed the individual fulfilling this role would have the title of Lieutenant and be at a rank above Sergeant. He stated this individual could be either union or non-union. Chair Weber stated he is in favor of growing the Department and supports this, but is not sure if the Township is ready financially.

Chief Hilk provided an overview of his recent FBI training upon a request from Chair Weber. A discussion ensued on the ongoing professionalization of the Police Department. Chief Hilk provided an overview of a proposed Comfort K9 Program.

4. **ADJOURNMENT**

As no further business came before the Board, Mr. Murphy moved to adjourn. Mr. Luketich seconded the motion. The motion passed on a unanimous voice vote. The meeting adjourned at 7:34 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Brandon J. Stanick
Township Manager