

MINUTES
BUTLER TOWNSHIP BUDGET COMMISSION
June 22, 2016

This meeting of the Butler Township Budget Commission was called to order at the Butler Township Meeting Hall, by Chairman Greg Brush. A meeting agenda was distributed by Erika Vogel.

ROLL CALL:

Present were Mark Adams, Ken Betz, Gregory Brush, Sherry Edwards, David Mohler, Erika Vogel and Jack Woods. Zafar Rizvi and Earl Moyer were also present from the public.

DISTRIBUTION OF MATERIALS:

Erika Vogel distributed a debt report to the Commission, as requested, for review and discussion.

DISCUSSION OF THE COMMISSION:

As a follow up from the last meeting, Erika Vogel explained all of the outstanding debt and TIF bond payments (reports attached). Greg Brush indicated that the only bond that would be easily paid off is the ambulance and that is paid from the fire fund. It does not appear that any of the TIF bond payments could be easily paid down.

Mark Adams explained the existing millage rates in the Township: 2006 Police Levy – 4.9 Mill Replacement, 2004 Road & Bridge – 1.5 Mill Replacement and 2003 Fire & Ambulance – 8.7 Mill Replacement.

Mark also indicated that it would take a 9 to 10 Mill Levy to raise \$2 million dollars. This estimation seems to be in line with the current millage (4.9) which brings in close to \$1 million dollars. It was noted that we would have could put on an additional 4.5 to 5 Mills for full funding of the Police Department. Greg asked if we could find out what the effective vs actual rate is. There was a question at the last meeting about closing out the TIF bonds if they were able to be paid off early. It was indicated that if that was done, the taxes would be distributed to all of the various levies; we would not continue to receive all of the tax income from the increased values. Greg Brush said he would also like to look at the idea of the Administrator and Financial Assistant (Payroll/Accounts Payable) salaries and benefits to be shared across departments. Another idea Greg presented was starting a process of rolling Fire Personnel vehicles to Police after a certain life or mileage.

The Board discussed the desire of a levy for the Police Department and discussed the Board's purpose. Ken Betz noted that the residents have not seen the loss of revenue and do not realize the financial situation that the department is in. Sherry Edwards stated that she believes the bad press coverage could cause citizens to not have faith in leadership, which may be another obstacle. David Mohler stated that as a collective board we can deliver the information and put out the recommendations and hope that informed decisions are made. He stated that we don't have a corrupt township and he does not feel the goal is to micro-manage the finances. Jack Woods stated that the Board was designed to look at the need for a Police Levy. Greg stated that the benefit of the Board is that there is no political affiliation; they can be the voice of the public. David reiterated that the media continues to put out misinformation and we have to get past that.

There was discussion about the funding issue that has come to light with moving forward with the Sheriff's Office. Mark indicated that from the beginning, he has said that the Trustees should leave the Sheriff decision up to the voters. David said he would like to tell the public what it is going to take to maintain their police department and leave the decision up to them. Greg indicated that in his opinion, the Sheriff proposal was a good deal, however, he didn't think that it was going to get passed the commissioners when it came to them for approval. It was noted that either way we would move forward, a levy is needed in the near future.

Sherry stated that the township does have aging residents on a fixed income that don't want to pay higher taxes. Ken Betz asked if the income from the JED-Z covers the costs of that area. Erika stated that she feels that the JED-Z covers almost a quarter of the Police budget, which she says significantly helps to support that district. When you think about the overall scale of the township, that district is only a very small area of the township.

Greg said that the goal of the budget commission is to provide general recommendations and look at budget projections. He said that if we are going to get serious, there should be no more additional spending from the general fund until our recommendations are formed. The township should operate at bare bones. In terms of the Police Department we need to understand what is the real staffing need, what will it cost to keep the 15 officers and what will it cost to have 18 officers (if that is the ideal number). We not only need to look at the police department fund, but all of the departments. The service department is also supplemented from the general fund. Erika indicated that getting a police levy passed would in turn help to sustain the service department, because there would be funds available to supplement until we can get a road levy,

the police department is in much greater need. Erika also noted that the new motor vehicle license tax that was passed will bring in approximately an additional \$35,000 in 2017 as well, that will help fund the service department. Paving programs and other projects have also been scaled back.

The board agreed to be at the next trustee's meeting and present a report to the trustees stating that the board is meeting regularly to work on the budget and are taking their role seriously. The board agreed to put some bullet points together for the Trustee's that will be presented at the June 27, 2016 meeting. It was noted that the board should request that the Trustee's don't approve any more additional spending than what was already budgeted for, for 2016, until the recommendations are presented by the budget commission.

DISCUSSION OF THE PUBLIC:

Zafar Rizvi stated that he came to see if the budget commission was following the bylaws that were created and looking at the budget line by line. Greg indicated that the budget commission has been given a lot of financial material for review over the last two meetings. Zafar also indicated that he believes residents want their local police department. He said that he will oppose a levy if it means eliminating the police department

Earl Moyer indicated that he believes there should be a moratorium on any spending that affects the township significantly. He believes the dialog that is occurring is very important – he said that the commission should not underestimate their power. He also noted that he would be willing to help out in any way possible.

NEXT MEETING:

Greg Brush stated that the next meeting would be held on Wednesday, July 13, 2016. Greg asked Erika if she could provide the 5-year capital plans for each department. Jack Woods noted he would be absent at our next meeting on July 13, 2016 as he will be out of town.

ADJOURNMENT:

There being no further business, Greg Brush moved to adjourn the meeting at 8:39 p.m.

ATTEST ON BEHALF OF the Butler Township Budget Commission:



Sherry Edwards, Secretary



Greg Brush, Chairperson

These minutes approved: July 19, 2016