

TOWN HALL

June 7,

2021

The Chair, Ms. Port called the meeting to order at 11:02 pm. Trustees Gabram and Mueller were present. Fiscal Officer Karen Walder and Trustee Assistant Melissa Palmer were also present. The following Department Head was present: Police Chief Tim Carroll.

Mrs. Walder went over the process of doing the budget. The budget process starts after permanent appropriations are passed March. On April 1st Mrs. Walder asked the department heads for their capital and reserve items looking out 5 years. In the middle of April, she starts entering the budget into UAN. In early May Mrs. Walder sent the summary of the capital requests from each of the departments to the Trustees and on May 18th sent a draft budget to the Trustees.

Mrs. Walder thanked her staff because putting the binders together and all the supporting materials represents about 150 hours. Mrs. Walder also thanked Cathleen Birli for putting the binders together this year.

Mrs. Walder stated that the Russell Township budget involves 27 unique funds and each fund is budgeted based on sources of revenue: levies, tax dollars, other sources, its expenditure trends and projection of future capital costs. The Township gets its revenues from 18 levies, inside millage, fees, gasoline tax, permissive tax, license plate tax, ambulance runs, interest earned on investments and from sold equipment. Mrs. Walder stated that the 2021 revenue is expected to be stronger than anticipated. Mrs. Walder stated that the Township was supposed to budget the revenue at 95% collection but so far it's been coming in at 100% per the county. Mrs. Walder stated that the county recommended that 2022 revenue be forecast at 98%, which amounts to about \$5.5 million in total.

Mrs. Walder stated that interest rates in 2022 are expected to be lower than previous years and she has been in contact with the Township's investment manager and used an estimate of \$76,800.00 in interest on investments.

Mrs. Walder stated she was in contact with the County Engineer and he recommended that we assume fuel prices rise by 20% in 2022.

The Township's recommended cash reserve at the end of 2021 is about \$2.3 million in total and has been factored into the budget materials. Mrs. Walder stated she budgeted a 20% increase in major medical for 2022. Mrs. Walder stated for dental and vision she budgeted a 6% increase for 2022.

Mrs. Walder stated that the reserve study recommendations are included in the budget. There is a transfer out line item in the 2022 budget for the amount that is going to the reserves. Mrs. Walder stated she relied on the department heads forecasts for what reserve item expenditures they are planning to make for 2022 and going out 5 years.

Mrs. Walder stated that the legal ad was put out in the papers and appeared in the June 3, 2021 issues for the Budget Hearing set for June 19, 2021 at 6:45 pm. The Budget Commission Hearing is scheduled for August 16, 2021.

Mrs. Walder stated that the budget does reflect the negotiated pay increases; the 3.5% for 2021, 3.25% for 2022 and 2.75% for 2023 with parity to all departments.

POLICE DEPARTMENT: Although no new Police levy is called for in the 2022 Budget, Mr. Mueller did propose replacing the 2 mill Levy from 1989 sometime in the future, however the Chief noted that this would result in a loss of the rollback/homestead exemption that benefits taxpayers. Chief Carroll stated he has prepared to put a levy on for 2023. Mr. Mueller and Chief Carroll both agree that a replacement would be the easiest to try and pass.

Mrs. Walder commended Chief Carroll on his fiscal management as he managed to keep his O&M expenditures almost flat lined for the last three years, despite OPBA negotiated pay raises.

Mr. Mueller asked Chief Carroll about current and future staffing levels. Chief Carroll stated that right now it is hard to find officers. Chief Carroll stated he has 9 full time officers and would like to add at least 1 more full time officer. The Chief also discussed staffing plans and the year-long process involved in vetting candidates.

Chief Carroll noted some items on his reserve study that showed they should be replaced in 2022 but he believes they still have additional life. He has moved some items around where he feels are appropriate for the next 5 years. Mrs. Walder stated that if an item does not need to be replaced

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now and can wait another year or two, that money does not have to be spent. The only restriction with the reserve money is it can only be spent on the listed items that were included in the reserve study.

Chief Carroll stated that the Police Department has completed just about all the projects for 2021 except for the new car. Chief Carroll stated that new car has not come in yet but they have received all of the equipment. Chief Carroll stated that the Tasers have been replaced and training has been completed. Chief Carroll stated that all the general facility maintenance has been done for this year, like the generator and HVAC unit.

Chief Carroll stated that he had the evidence room audited in March. Sgt. Swaidner and Officer Valerio were the 2 evidence custodians with Officer McIvor in training and all three completed audit of the room. Chief Carroll received a letter stating it was completed and will provide a copy to the Fiscal Office.

Trustees discussed with Chief Carroll the outlook regarding body cameras. Chief Carroll described some of the practical issues involved, and recommended that if the State mandates them that the Department would seek a Grant to offset the cost.

Chief Carroll stated he has money aside for the storage building. Mrs. Walder stated that starting in 2022; she has allocated a \$1,000 a month for operation and maintenance in the Police Department budget.

Chief Carroll has funds allocated for computer software upgrades, firewall upgrade and workstation upgrades over the next five years.

Chief Carroll reported that officer training remains a priority and although there are not many Grants available, internal training continues to be done frequently and Lexipol has been a valuable resource.

Mr. Mueller made the motion to adjourn. Mr. Gabram seconded the motion and it passed unanimously.

The meeting was adjourned at 12:26 pm.

Kristina Port, Chair

Karen Walder, Fiscal Officer

Recorded by: J. Sustar