

TOWN HALL

June 12,

2023

The Chair, Mr. Rambo called the meeting to order at 10:01 am. Trustees Port and Mueller were present. Fiscal Officer Karen Walder was present, and Board Administrator Melissa Palmer was present via Teams. The following Department Head was present: Assistant Fire Chief Nick Sambula.

The Pledge of Allegiance was said.

Mrs. Walder stated that for Fire & EMS there are 5 levies that are continuing in nature, and they are forecasted to bring in \$1.3 million for 2024 at the 98% collection rate recommended by the County Auditor.

The cash reserve provides the recommended cash reserve for each department for the end of 2024 going into 2025. This allows the department to function essentially for the first quarter of the following year until the levy revenue comes in. Mrs. Walder stated that for the Fire Department, the recommended cash reserve is \$525,952 which includes the annual debt payment of \$75,000 for the fire engine.

Ms. Port asked Asst. Fire Chief Sambula regarding the new ambulance. Asst. Fire Chief Sambula stated they have currently received a quote back and waiting for a couple more quotes. Stated that the budgeted amount was \$260,000 but the quotes are coming in around \$360,000. Stated there is about 24 month waiting period as well.

Mrs. Walder stated that right now the in the vehicle reserve has appropriated \$260,000 for this ambulance for this year. She asked if the intention was to purchase this year and Asst. Fire Chief Sambula said yes. Mr. Rambo asked Asst. Fire Chief Sambula if they wanted to split up the \$260,000 and put some towards a down payment and finance the remaining balance then and save the remaining balance towards future vehicles. Mr. Rambo thinks trying to budget right now and reserving money for vehicles that are multiple thousands of dollars is difficult. Need to figure out the best way to work the reserve budget at a reasonable amount year over year and split it between down payment and financing. The Trustees agree with putting \$100,000 down on the new ambulance this year and financing the balance using a Lease-Purchase arrangement.

Mr. Mueller asked regarding the replacement of a \$112,000 boiler in 2025 and if it needs to be replaced if it's failing. Asst. Fire Chief Sambula stated he did not talk to Chief Frazier regarding this but to his knowledge it's just projected life expectancy and to his knowledge not having current problems. It is 20 years old and has a current maintenance contract on it.

Mrs. Walder stated that reserve funding is going to be important over the next few years for the building reserve, especially for a \$500,000 roof replacement scheduled in 2028. \$225,000 scheduled for 2024 for driveway. Mrs. Walder stated that budget reflects the recommendations of the reserve study. Asst. Fire Chief Sambula stated that the concrete is originally from 2003 and it's crumbling from wear and tear from the trucks. Asst. Fire Chief Sambula stated that the roof could probably be done in two parts over 2 years.

Mrs. Walder stated that other sources of revenue for the department is sale of assets. Mrs. Walder stated that there is nothing budgeted for 2024 and asked Asst. Fire Chief Sambula to talk to Chief Frazier if there is going to be any sale of

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assets. Asst. Fire Chief Sambula stated that they were going to getting rid of the brush truck so that would bring in revenue. Mrs. Walder stated that she spoke with Chief Frazier and stated that he is pulling back to meet the match for the SCBA Grant.

Mrs. Walder stated that we have a FEMA Grant that we received in 2021 for SCBA packs and at that time the total grant was \$161,560, of which FEMA would pay about \$154,000 and the Township would have been responsible for \$7,700. Mrs. Walder stated that Chief Frazier has applied for the funds and received quotes, which are much higher than the grant amount considered. Mrs. Walder stated that we received \$152,732 from FEMA but the quote that the Chief received for the equipment is \$209,310 and the Township's match has gone up to \$56,579. Mrs. Walder stated she has been in touch with Chief Frazier asking if he intended the add to the appropriations for that match or reallocate something that was appropriated and he indicated he wanted to reallocate the brush truck, hose, nozzles, tech rescue and dry hydrant.

Mrs. Walder stated that budget does not include any provisions for full-time staffing. Asst. Fire Chief Sambula felt the best route for full-time staffing would be to wait to have the strategic plan done first and find out the best time to execute going forward with a full-time staffing. Asst. Fire Chief Sambula said that with the strategic plan it will provide a plan and the steps how to get there. Chief Frazier has received 2 quotes back and still waiting for 1 more.

Mr. Mueller suggests that the Fire Department puts a levy on the ballot this year. Mr. Rambo stated they need to wait to see what the strategic plan says first and then go from there. Mr. Rambo said if we must go out for a levy, having the strategic plan done will show the voters what the levy is for and have proper documentation.

The Trustees addressed the shortfall of the budget to the recommended cash reserve and decided to not budget any funds transfer to the vehicle reserve fund for 2024, and to reassess next year for the 2025 budget. Mrs. Walder asked Asst. Fire Chief Sambula whether the planned ambulance upgrades would go forward in 2023. If not, then that \$149,122 could help with the recommended cash reserve shortfall.

Asst. Fire Chief Sambula left the meeting at 11:04 am.

Police Chief Tom Swaidner entered the meeting at 11:05 am.

Mrs. Walder stated that the Police Department has several levies dating back to 1976 and the most recent was in 2017. They are continuing and the Auditor's recommendation is budgeting at 98% collection, which is about \$1.848 million.

Ms. Port asked Chief Swaidner what the \$100,000 garage project is for. Chief Swaidner stated he would like to have a pole barn constructed behind the Police Department. A 3-4 car garage would be used for 2 vehicles that are currently stored outside, an evidence bay and provide space to store their speed trailer. Chief Swaidner said it will be kept very simple with no windows. Chief Swaidner stated that he would like to site the best location and have soil sampling done this year.

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Chief Swaidner stated that is looking to hire 1 additional full-time officer, which would be the first addition since 2010. He explained they have been hiring part-time officers but at this time they have no applicants; they have posted and called academies and have had no luck. Chief Swaidner said this officer would be used as an "early car" to address the shift overlap. Having this full-time officer cuts down on the need for additional part-time officers but the department will always be looking for part-time officers.

Ms. Port asked if the SSO is budgeted, and Mrs. Walder stated that it is not. The budget does reflect the additional full-time officer though. The SSO initiative was not included in the budget for two reasons: first, it is not yet finalized, and second, because intent of the program is to mostly pay for itself. Chief Swaidner stated that

the school is to pay for the compensation and benefits, and the Township will provide the vehicle, upfitting and maintenance. Chief Swaidner said if the initiative is adopted,

instead of trading in another car will keep it for the SSO and will add it to the vehicle rotation.

Mr. Mueller asked the term of the current collective bargaining agreement and Chief Swaidner indicated that negotiations should begin this Fall for a new 3-yr Agreement starting Jan 2024.

Ms. Port asked why body cameras aren't in the budget until 2027. Chief Swaidner said there are two reasons for that. First, because he is hoping for more grant opportunities to come up over that time and would rather use state and federal money instead of Township paying for them. The second reason is in 2027 Chief Swaidner is looking at renewing their in-car video system. Chief Swaidner would like to integrate the body cameras with the in-car video system, so when an officer activates their lights, it automatically turns the in-car video system and body camera.

There was discussion about the department's shortfall of about \$40k to the recommended cash reserve, however Mrs., Walder noted that would likely be covered when the prior-year HRA encumbrance is released at the end of 2023. Mr. Mueller suggested going out for another levy in Spring 2024. It has been 7 years since the Police Department had to go out for a levy. Trustees agree that Fire and Police shouldn't go out of a levy at the same time. Mr. Mueller said they should plan for a replacement levy, but Mrs. Walder advises against that because our residents would lose their rollback. Mrs. Walder enumerated the options the Trustees have when it comes to increasing revenue or decreasing expenses, and her recommendation was that a Levy should be the last resort. She noted that once we close 2023, we will have a better idea for the cash reserve for 2024.

Chief Swaidner stated that the Police Department building is doing well and fixing things on a regular basis. 2028 has a lot of building expenses under the reserve fund but Chief Swaidner doesn't think everything will need to be done at that time.

Chief Swaidner had one additional item regarding the additional full-time officer. Chief Swaidner stated he has an officer that will be out of a few months due to

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having shoulder surgery. Chief Swaidner said he spoke with Mrs. Walder about the situation and if they Board was in favor of the additional full-time officer, what would be the possibility of doing it July 1<sup>st</sup>? Chief Swaidner said this would give his department the flexibility to put that additional officer in his place while he is on leave and would reduce the need for additional part time hours and overtime. Starting January 2024, the officer would then start the overlapping schedule. Chief Swaidner stated that it is in the budget to bring on the full-time officer now. Chief Swaidner said he would like to promote a current part-time officer to the full-time officer position. The Trustees would like Chief Swaidner to advertise the opening within the department, interview the interested part-time officer candidates, and then make a recommendation to the Trustees.

*Mr. Mueller made the motion to adjourn. Ms. Port seconded the motion and it passed unanimously.*

The meeting was adjourned at 11:57 am.

Matthew Rambo, Chair

Karen Walder, Fiscal Officer

Recorded by: J. Ezzone