

TOWN HALL

June 6,

2022

The Chair, Mr. Mueller called the meeting to order at 10:00 am. Trustees Port and Rambo were present. Fiscal Officer Karen Walder and Board Administrator Melissa Palmer were present. The following Department Head was present: Gene Layne.

The Pledge of Allegiance was said.

There was discussion on paving. Mr. Layne stated that in 2010 he had a goal to have all chip and sealed roads paved by 2020 but that hasn't happened, so he is hoping to have everything done within the next 3 years. The Township has applied for OPWC funding for Dines Road but stated there may be restrictions on that funding. OPWC may want them to widen the road from 18' to 20' but that will require a lot of additional work and could double the cost.

The Board discussed lowering the Road Department's cash reserve from 170% to 120% and move that money to paving. Would give Mr. Layne roughly \$238,000 more towards paving.

Mr. Mueller asked Mr. Layne regarding the shape of his buildings for next five to six years. Mr. Layne stated his main building has cracks in walls, floors are busting up, needs new electric, the 8 overhead doors need to be replaced, and septic needs to be updated. Mr. Layne asked the Trustees to start thinking about it now on what the plan would be for the Road Department; build new or do a remodel. Ms. Port suggested that the Board undertake a "keep vs new" analysis and also consider the option to sell the current Road Dept property and build a new Road Garage on other Township property. Mr. Mueller suggests that Mr. Layne goes out for a replacement levy in 2-3 years for a building.

Mrs. Walder went over the expenditure trends and stated the Road Department's O&M 5-year average is a little over a million dollars. Total revenue for 2023 is roughly \$1.8 million. Mr. Layne has \$400,000 in capital for paving for the next 3 years and then up to \$500,000 for the last 2 years. Mrs. Walder stated that between OPWC Grants and 0% OPWC loans, there are low-cost ways to get additional paving capital without going out for a levy.

Mr. Layne stated he is going to need a new plow truck in 2024. Stated he got out of sequence with plow trucks; goal was to turn over in 12 years. Mr. Layne stated that a mainline truck is currently 14 years old and has issues. He likes to take the older trucks and retire them as backup for another 2-3 years. The department currently has 8 trucks and requires six for the snow plowing season. Would like to replace the 14-year-old truck and would put him back on the 12-year cycle come 2024. Mr. Layne requested ARPA funding for a new plow truck and has budgeted another new one for 2024.

Mr. Layne stated that current status of other big equipment is good. The Township recently purchased the new Gradall and the new chipper should hopefully be coming soon. Mr. Layne stated his staffing is good and is staffed adequately.

The Board asked the Mr. Layne to prioritize his ARPA requests and they are as followed:

- Plow Truck
- Paving

Mrs. Walder stated that in our current 2022 fiscal year must appropriate based on some worst-case assumptions. Mrs. Walder stated for all departments that have employees covered under benefits, used a 30% increase factor for major medical benefits for next year.

Mrs. Walder stated regarding the Road Department building itself, the Reserve Study that was done in 2020 looked out 40 years for that facility and factor in costs for repairs. An updated Reserve Study is in the works for his year. Mrs. Walder also suggested that if there is some plan to replacing the building within a 40-year period, that needs to be communicated to Miller Dodson. Mr. Rambo stated Mr. Layne should be involved when they come out discuss the plan. Mr. Layne stated that he liked Auburn Township's new Road Department building, so Mr. Mueller asked Mr. Layne to find out who did the work.

Mr. Layne left the meeting at 10:57 am.

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Fire Chief John Frazier entered the meeting at 11:00 am.

Chief Frazier put together a packet for the Trustees to review on full-time Firefighters. The packet includes proposed job descriptions and a compensation package, as compared to the Police Department. Chief Frazier stated that he would send it off to our HR Legal Counsel for review. The Board discussed the hiring of 2 full-time Firefighters, but they still have no numbers that can be put into the budget to make sure there are enough funds to support it, nor have discussions taken place regarding pay scales, benefits, eligibility, job description, hours, or collective bargaining. Mr.

Rambo suggested to lower the cash reserve from 163% to 120%, which would give the Fire Department around \$230,000 and can put that towards salary and benefits. Mr. Mueller estimated that amount would cover salaries for three people. Mr. Mueller wants to put a replacement levy on the 2023 May Primary for personnel purposes, so that the Department can hire 4 full-time Firefighters. Mr. Rambo asked whether the lack of a full-time staff has resulted in a lack of service for residents and Chief Frazier indicated there was no lack of service. Mr. Rambo & Mr. Mueller expressed concern about adding staff now, but not having the funding to continue their employment without a levy. Mr. Rambo also expressed concern that Russell Township residents already pay the highest per-capita tax for Fire services in the County.

Chief Frazier reviewed his 5-year capital plan, including a new ambulance, which is around \$275,000. Chief Frazier is looking at financing over a 10-year period. He is proposing to remount a current ambulance and get a new chassis. They would remount the box on the new chassis and save about \$60,000. His goal would be to order the chassis the first of the year and will probably receive it in about 2 years.

The Board asked the Chief Frazier to prioritize his ARPA requests and they are as follow:

- EMS Equipment Replacement
- Personnel
- Dormitory Upgrade

The Board asked Chief Frazier about the dormitory upgrade. There is currently space for 4 people, the addition would add 1,200 square feet.

Mrs. Walder reviewed the Fire Department's 5-year average for expenditure trends - about \$1 million in O&M. The Fire Department receives revenue from various levies and from ambulance runs, and the 5-year average is about \$1.4 million in revenue. The recommended cash reserve for the Fire Department is about \$528,000. The budget as proposed does not include any expenses related to full-time staffing.

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

The meeting was adjourned at 12:16 pm.

Jim Mueller, Chair

Karen Walder, Fiscal Officer

Recorded by: J. Ezzone