

TOBYHANNA TOWNSHIP BOARD OF SUPERVISORS
BUDGET MEETING
September 24, 2024

The September Budget Meeting of the Tobyhanna Township Board of Supervisors (“Board”) was held on September 24, 2024, at the Tobyhanna Township Government Center Building located at 105 Government Center Way, Pocono Pines, PA 18350.

Present are Supervisors John Kerrick, Rachel Schickling and Edward Tutrone. Also present are Manager Robert Bartal, and Assistant Manager Crystal Butler. Supervisor Ted Wolski appeared virtually. Supervisor Joseph Colyer and Solicitor Harry Coleman, Esquire, were not present.

1. John Kerrick calls the meeting to order at 6:00PM; a quorum is present.
2. The Pledge of Allegiance is recited.
3. Announcements: There were no announcements.
4. Budget Session Business:
 - A. Consider Services of Temporary Employment Agency: Robert Bartal states that they had a recent opening for a zoning administrative assistant and are having a heck of time getting any applications that would be a fit for the position. Mr. Bartal states that he and Crystal Butler met Nicholas Michalisin from One Source Staffing Solutions and discussed the options available. Edward Tutrone makes a motion to allow the Township to pursue One Source Staffing Solutions, Rachel Schickling seconds. Vote: all in favor; motion carries.
 - B. 2024 Township Budget Discussion:
 1. Budget Process: Robert Bartal introduces Crystal Butler, Assistant Manager, Laura Marasco, Fiscal Specialist, Jim Rafferty, Roadmaster and Beth Eisler, Township Secretary who are here to start the presentation. Mr. Bartal states that this meeting is going to focus on the general fund portion of the budget as well as the Emergency Services fund. The Emergency Services fund last year had a dedicated .22 millage rate that does not come from the General Fund. Mr. Bartal has asked the agencies in effect to make a presentation so that the Board has a better understanding of the ancillary funds. He states that the Fire Fund came from three funds, the general fund, fire fund (which has a designated millage) and the EMS fund (which has a designated millage). The fire fund has three items left: the real estate rebate, worker’s compensation and a pass through from the auditor general’s office. Mr. Bartal states that it would be better solved to have a line item in the Emergency Services fund rather than three funds.

Mr. Bartal highlights the improvements made in 2024, the playgrounds at Blanche Price Park and Keiper Field along with the little league field.

Mr. Bartal states that we have three planned budget sessions. He reviews the two additional budget sessions as well as when the budget needs to be advertised for approval.

2. General Fund Review: Robert Bartal states that they are going to touch on the current mileage rate within the Township, County and School District along with the comparison with other mileage rates throughout the County which comes from the Monroe

County website. Crystal Butler provides a slide presentation. Mr. Bartal states that in reviewing the 2024 taxables, they found that they exceeded the anticipated 87% collected and there was some concern with the increase in taxes if we would still see the payment come in like it did, but we have had no problems.

3. Presentations and Board discussions regarding funding:

- PMRPD – Budget Update: Robert Bartal states that he is on the budget committee for Pocono Mountain Regional Police, and they are currently 89 hours over their 2024 allotment which is .5%. Mr. Bartal discussed this with Chief Wagner, and he reports that this is due in large part to the increase in patrol hours and he will be able to come right on budget unless some totally unforeseen happens. Mr. Bartal states that the proposed budget for 2025 is out but not complete. They anticipate a 6.5% increase at \$171,250.00 to the Township. Chief Wagner is 85% done with the budget and they do not see the numbers changing much off the 6.5%.

Robert Bartal states that in 2024 the monies from the Emergency Services fund were distributed between the 2 fire companies that service the Township and PMREMS. These monies were used to pay building expenses including utilities, upkeep and insurance for the 2 Township facilities as well as the Pocono Summit facility. Mr. Bartal states that on the 18th of September we received \$87,718.21 for the 2024 Foreign Fire fund and the Board must decide how they want to split the money within 60 days of receipt. This has been added to the Agenda for the Board of Supervisors' Regular Business Meeting.

- TTBF: CJ Dickinson reviews Tobyhanna Township Bureau of Fire's 2024 budget needs. Mr. Dickinson states that they would like to get another sign at the Blakeslee Fire Station. Mr. Dickinson would also like to get the Bucks County gold package in-house training with the Pocono Summit Volunteer Fire Department. Robert Bartal asks if it must be in the name of one fire department. CJ Dickinson states that that is typically how it is done, and they would coordinate with the other department regarding training. They will have 200 hours onsite training, 2 certificate tests per department annually plus tuition free access to on-line programs. Mr. Dickinson states that they would like a grant writer for the FEMA Grant Program, moving into 2025. He also states they would like to start funding and planning for a replacement of a fire engine with a minimum 1000-gallon tank and 1250 GPM Pump. A discussion was held on fire engine replacement.

- PSVFC: Pocono Summit Volunteer Fire Company has no presentation.

- Clymer Library: This was discussed earlier.

- PM REMS: Austin Schrader of PMR EMS reviews some of the services provided and community engagement. Mr. Schrader states that they primary driver of their financial crisis is they get reimbursed and their expenses. Mr. Schrader states that they are looking to increase additional personnel and are in the final stages of bidding out the replacement of their headquarters. They are hoping to bid this out by the beginning of next year. Mr. Schrader states that the shift in demographics is placing an additional strain and long-time support is needed to maintain the current level of service. Mr. Schrader states that they would like to see (a) an increase in their fuel allotment, (b) an increase in their CAPEX allotment and (c) improvements to the ESB Building. A discussion was held regarding the improvements needed to the ESB Building.

- Short-Term Rental Update: Crystal Butler provides a short-term rental update. Ms. Butler states that there is no hotel excise tax for municipalities and there is currently a way in which a municipality can “levy” this tax. A discussion was held. Ted Wolski states that it is his understanding that the Township brought in \$307,000 in permit fees & fines and that our expenditures are about \$164,000. Edward Tutrone asks if a property is sold, does the property notify us, does the permit stay in the queue or does it drop off. A discussion was held.

4. Discuss Township Roads for next year’s paving: Robert Bartal states that at the September 16th Board of Supervisors meeting they identified and approved roads to be paved in 2025. Mr. Bartal states that Kalahari Boulevard looks like it could use some work. He states that he received information from Tunkhannock regarding a process they are undergoing on Stoney Hollow Road. Mr. Bartal would like a motion to add Kalahari Boulevard and Stoney Hollow Road to the list. Rachel Schickling makes the motion, Edward Tutrone seconds. Vote: all in favor; motion carries. Mr. Bartal states that Gross Drive is on the list and do we want to widen the road. A discussion regarding Gross Drive.

5. Capital Reserve Update: Robert Bartal states that the Capital Reserve is a wish list for 2025. Mr. Bartal states that the GSB and ESB maintenance and digital storage of records were not done last year and they are hopeful to get those up and running. Mr. Bartal states that we need to replace one of our trucks through the 2025 budget. Mr. Bartal states that in 2024 we received no bids on our vegetation control and Jim Rafferty feels that DPW can do a lot of the trimming on some of the roads, they would need to purchase a chipper. This will be placed on October 21, 2024, Agenda.

5. Board of Supervisors Report/Comment: None.

6. Public Comment: None.

7. Adjournment: Meeting adjourned at 7:28PM.

Minutes recorded by Bethanne Eisler


Bethanne Eisler, Township Secretary