



The Solebury Messenger

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No Tax Hike, Sustained Services in 2023 Township Budget

Solebury Township's budget for 2023 maintains or increases current services, funds some new priorities, all while holding taxes at existing rates. The budget was approved by the Board of Supervisors at its Dec. 13, 2022, meeting.

Significant projects in 2023 include continuing the Township's deer management program, modernizing and repairing the HVAC systems in the municipal building, professional services for ongoing sustainability efforts and to support the new 202 Property Advisory Committee, and computerization of the Township's tax map parcel records. Solebury's trail system, largely funded through state and county grants, will continue to see improvement through 2023.

The budget anticipates that local tax revenue has largely returned to predictable patterns after experiencing some anomalies at the height of the pandemic, allowing the Township to build up its reserve funds, which protect Solebury from sudden and unpredictable costs, like those associated with severe weather.

"We'll be ready for the future," said Board Chair Mark Baum Baicker. "Hopefully

we're going to get to the point where there will be more income coming in during the year, so we can further support those reserve funds that are so important."

The credit rating agencies that evaluate municipal debt have cited Solebury's reserve funds as an important factor in the Township's strong financial position.

This is the first Solebury budget for Township Manager Chris Garges, who joined the administration in June after the retirement of Dennis Carney.

"The Township continues to be in excellent financial condition," said Garges, noting that a tax increase was not necessary to offer the same level of service. The

Township receives 16 cents for every dollar residents pay in property taxes, with the rest going to the school district.

After unanimous passage of the budget and corresponding tax rate resolutions, Baum Baicker thanked Garges, Carney, and Treasurer Michele Blood "for all their efforts throughout the year that allow us to adopt a budget that provides our residents with the expected high level of service, and is once again balanced."

In addition to a line-item spreadsheet of revenues and expenditures, the 2023 budget includes a separate breakdown of capital projects and a narrative description of the budget, all available on the Township website.

Township Joins Facebook, Board Adopts New Social Media Policy

This fall, the Township launched an official page on Facebook to help connect with residents who use the social network as a source of news and information.

In order to preserve an environment for Solebury residents to be informed and to discuss issues related to the Township, to protect the rights of individual citizens and comply with regulations governing the public's Right to Know, Solebury Township adopted a Social Media Policy

at the Dec. 13, 2022, meeting of the Board of Supervisors.

This policy is meant to guide Township officials who moderate Solebury's social media channels, as well as to inform residents of what they can expect when engaging with the Township on social media. You can read the new policy on the Township website at SoleburyTwp.org/social.

You can follow the Township on Facebook at Facebook.com/SoleburyTwp.

What's in Your Inbox?

Meeting agendas, police alerts, weather bulletins and more are available by email. Visit SoleburyTwp.org and click "Email Notices."

Board Creates Committee to Gather Input, Guide Future of Old Farmers Market

The 202 Property Advisory Committee will hold meetings and guide decisions on the future use of the roughly 13-acre former flea market site at the intersection of Route 202 and Reeder Road. The committee, composed of volunteers and supported by professional staff, will operate much as the Aquetong Spring Advisory Committee did, shepherding the creation of Aquetong Spring Park through a lengthy series of community meetings and detailed research.

In creating the committee, the Board of Supervisors directed committee members to hew closely to the findings of the Township's 202 Property Survey. The spring survey of Solebury households asked residents to rank

the importance of over a dozen proposed uses for the land. Nearly 28 percent of households, representing a third of the population, responded, showing a preference for open space, active and passive recreational options.

With the survey results as their guideposts, committee members will hold numerous public hearings, seek additional citizen input, rigorously examine the costs and environmental impact of proposals and make recommendations to the Board. Supervisors stress that, as with all significant Township projects, the committee's priorities should be thoroughness and transparency, not speed, in order to reach the best possible outcome.

Solebury Climate & Energy Forum Engages Community in Long Term Goals

Solebury's Climate & Energy Forum set out to engage with the community to discuss residents' ideas about how to help mitigate the effects of climate change, and also to learn about the broader aspects of sustainability.

The event was held at the New Hope Solebury High School café on Oct. 13, 2022, with more than 40 residents attending. Speakers included Neale Dougherty, the Bucks County Planning Commission Director of Sustainability; Peter Brussock of The Elm Group; Shannon Pendleton of Sanderson Sustainable Design, and Jim Mansfield, a member of the Township's Environmental Advisory Council. After opening remarks, residents formed into small groups and discussed a number of climate-related topics, arriving at recommendations and presenting them back to the group as a whole.

"Solebury has committed to sustainability for many years,"

said Board of Supervisors Chair Mark Baum Baicker. "You can see that it is a central theme in our Comprehensive Plan, which is due for renewal in 2024. We have more recently made a commitment to help mitigate the effects of climate change by passing the Ready for 100 resolution back in 2020 and having created a draft of our Energy Transition Plan, which is on the Township website for public review."

Solebury Township adopted the Ready For 100 resolution in July 2020, part of a national movement initiated and run by the Sierra Club. The main goals are to achieve 100 percent clean electricity by 2035, and a complete clean

energy profile, including vehicles and HVAC, by 2050.

"This is a long-term commitment," said Supervisor John Francis. "One of the most impactful things we can do at the Township is to lead by example and many of these initiatives and achievements, while providing some efficiency in energy usage, also demonstrate and educate us all to the possibilities that can be translated back into all our homes and businesses."

Presentation slides, break-out group notes, and supporting documentation, including the Rf100 Resolution and Energy Transition Plan, are available on the Township website.



Over 40 residents participated in the Climate & Energy Forum, held at New Hope Solebury High School.

Land Preservation Story: Edric Mason

My wife and I moved to Solebury Township because we liked the pastoral farmlands, historic stone houses, forests, streams and the Delaware River which offer outdoor recreational activities. Small villages with interesting shops, good restaurants and important services, like the Doylestown Hospital, also attracted us. Had our children not been grown and on their own, the excellent school system would have been an additional attraction. All this for reasonably low real estate taxes compared to the surrounding region. What I have learned in our 22 years living here is that the favorable attributes of this community did not occur by accident, but rather by resident volunteers and elected officials who worked hard to create this environment.

Six years ago, a friend and member of the Board of Supervisors asked if I had an interest in serving as a volunteer on the Land Preservation Committee (LPC). I had never worked in government before, most of my previous life was in the corporate world, but I did have a long history of enjoying outdoor activities. I also had an interest in learning about land preservation. What I have learned in my tenure on LPC is the following:

History — The Land Preservation Committee, previously the Land Use

Committee, was formed in 1987 out of concern for the loss of open space, especially farmland, due to development pressures.

Mission — The Land Preservation Committee is “to work effectively with individual landowners to meet their needs and to support township goals.”

Authority — The Land Preservation Committee serves as an advisory function to the Board of Supervisors. While it does not have authority to make decisions, it is influential in the decisions that are made.

Support — In preparation of the current Comprehensive Plan which guides our Board of Supervisors in attaining community goals, a survey of residents was taken to obtain their viewpoints. Excerpts from the survey relative to land preservation include:

- “Open space/scenic beauty” and “rural setting” were selected as the most often out of the nine choices provided for the reason the resident chose to live in Solebury.

- Out of 17 policy options provided, the overall top priorities were “retention of rural character” and “natural resources protection.”

- 73% of respondents support continued protection of open space and farmland through the purchase of open space and easements.

Financial Commitment —

Since 1996 residents have approved five bond referendums totaling \$56 million to purchase land development rights of qualifying properties, to limit future development.

Solebury Township is what it is today through goals established by the Board of Supervisors in response to the majority of its residents. We



should be thankful to those past and present whose efforts have made Solebury Township a desirable place to live. If you would like to learn more about land preservation, please contact Jean Weiss, administrator for the Land Preservation Committee, at 215-297-5656 or jweiss@soleburytwp.org.

Edric Mason is the Chairman of the Solebury Township Land Preservation Committee.

Solebury Police Purchase New Tasers

Newer, safer tasers will be issued next year to Solebury's police officers.

The current model of taser is activated by a trigger and similar in shape and color to an officer's sidearm weapon. The new model is yellow, with a push button on the side.

While it has never happened in Solebury, there have been rare incidents over the last several years where officers have mistaken their pistol for a taser, and fired a shot when they meant to trigger their taser. Changing the trigger mechanism and location, and

coloring them bright yellow, should prevent any such mistakes with the new devices.

"We want to take that thought process of trigger-pull away from the officer," explained Solebury Police Sgt. Kevin Edwards at a budget hearing this summer. "We think it will be safer for the officer and safer for the community."

The new devices are budgeted to cost \$25,000. The current tasers will be sold to a company that will refurbish and resell them.

2023 D.A.R.E. Program

Solebury Township Police will bring D.A.R.E. back to New Hope Solebury students in 2023. The program, revamped in the early 2000s and commended by the Surgeon General, seeks to help children make safe and responsible decisions in their daily lives.

Officer Gina Ferzetti will visit 2nd and 5th graders in their classrooms once weekly for a 10-week program. Officer Ferzetti attended an extensive 80-hour D.A.R.E. certification training course in Bridgewater, N.J.

Fallen Leaves: Do's and Don'ts for the Environment

Before the first snow falls, it's time to manage the fallen leaves, clippings from the last mow of the lawn, and the accumulated twigs and trimmings from warmer seasons. Whether you've contracted with a landscaping company or prefer to tend to the yard yourself, here are a few considerations to keep in mind to protect our environment, respect our neighbors and keep our roadways safe.

Composting is good for the environment.

A well-maintained compost pile enriches the soil, reduces the need for chemical fertilizers, gives a home to beneficial bacteria and lowers your carbon footprint. You should site your compost pile in a dry, shady spot near a water source and away from the road, and feed it a mix of untreated green and brown yard trimmings. For more information on composting, the US Department of Environmental Protection has an informational website at www.epa.gov/recycle/composting-home.

Scattering grass clippings in the road is bad for the environment. Township equipment can't vacuum up grass clippings, and the next storm will wash them down the

catch basins, clogging inlets and choking streams. These cuttings themselves are not healthy for our water ecology, let alone any herbicides and pesticides that they may contain.

Wet leaves are a roadway hazard. Even when dry, leaves hide road obstacles and obscure pavement markings; when wet they are as slick as ice. The Township works diligently to remove leaves from our roads, primarily to keep drivers safe from slipping and skidding conditions. While Solebury has a single leaf collection truck to gather and distribute leaves to local farmers for mulch, large leaf piles left at the edge of the road are a safety concern — they block drivers' vision, reduce the size of the running lane and all too frequently blow out across the roadway.

Christmas Tree Dropoff – December 28, 2022 to January 31, 2023 – Drop trees off at the designated location at the Public Works Building.

Solebury Tree and Brush Trimmings for Recycling Drop-off is Suspended – suspended as of December 31, 2022 and will reopen April 5, 2023.

Storm Outage Contacts

PECO 1-800-841-4141 or www.peco.com/Outages/CheckOutageStatus/Pages/OutageMap.aspx

Verizon 1-800-837-4966 or www.verizon.com/support/residential/service-outage

XFINITY (Comcast) 1-800-934-6489 or www.xfinity.com/support/status

Solebury Secures Grant for Carversville Flood Control

Solebury Township has secured a \$50,000 state grant to fund dredging and remedial repairs on the Pannaucussing Creek at Wismer and Carversville roads. State Sen. Steve Santarsiero announced the grant award at an event in Carversville on Nov. 1, and Solebury Supervisors say they hope it will be the first of many funding efforts to address the aftermath of Hurricane Ida.

"We've been working on many fronts to get funding to address the long-term flooding risks faced by our residents," said Solebury Township Board of Supervisors Chair Mark Baum Baicker. "Sen. Santarsiero was able to get us these critical funds for badly-needed culvert dredging. Not only is that work so important on its own but it also seems to

have created momentum toward getting us even more help, potentially on the federal level, for projects to shore up the banks of the Pannaucussing Creek through Carversville down to the Delaware River to mitigate future disasters."

This \$50,000 grant will fund the removal of debris from the culvert at Wismer and Carversville and the bulk excavation of debris accumulated upstream. This is the first stage of a larger project that will include stream restoration along the Pannaucussing.

"The Township was also notified recently that the National Park Service is going to provide a great deal of assistance," said Baum Baicker. "They will provide design work and other

assistance that will impact the entire creek, all the way down to the river."

Efforts to secure funding for these efforts from state and federal agencies have been ongoing for over a year. The Park Service became involved after outreach from Supervisor Robert McEwan and Lower Delaware Wild & Scenic. McEwan noted that former Supervisor Bill Tinsman was instrumental in pushing for the inclusion of the Pannaucussing Creek in the Wild & Scenic River program.

"After a year of trying, we hope this first grant through Sen. Santarsiero will give us some momentum. It's still a long fight to get money, but we're hoping to get these projects fully funded," said Baum Baicker.

Remember to License Your Dog at the Start of the New Year

All dogs three months or older must be licensed by Jan. 1 of each year. Violators can be cited with a maximum fine of \$300 per violation plus court costs.

An annual license is \$8.50 and a lifetime license is \$51.50. If the animal is spayed or neutered, the annual fee is \$6.50 and lifetime is \$31.50. Discounts are available to older adults and people with disabilities.

The small license fee helps the millions of dogs in the state by funding the Pennsylvania Department of Agriculture Bureau of Dog Law Enforcement.

Dog licenses are available from your local county treasurer and other licensing agents.

Reasons for dog licensing:

- It's the law. All dogs three months and older must have a current license.
- If your dog gets lost, a license is the best way to get him back. A license helps animal control and shelters identify your dog and get him back home safely.

- The cost of a license is less than the penalty for being caught without one. Owners who fail to license their dogs could face a fine of up to \$300 for each unlicensed dog.

- License fees support animal control. The annual fee you pay to license your dog helps keep shelters running and supports the work of the Bureau of Dog Law Enforcement, which is responsible for ensuring the welfare of dogs, regulating dangerous dogs and overseeing annual licensing and rabies vaccinations.



2022 Solebury Holiday Tiles for Sale, While Supplies Last

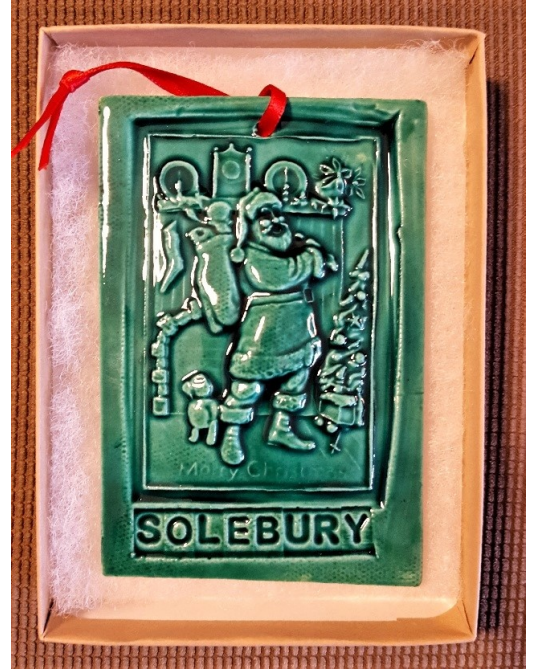
Solebury's Holiday Tiles for 2022 are still available for purchase at the Township Municipal Building, while supplies last. Each unique 3 x 5 inch tile is individually handcrafted by local Bucks County artist, Isabel O'Brien.

2022 Holiday Tile priced at just \$30.00 each, the tile features a traditional Santa standing inside a home next to the fireplace, with his bag of presents, a small puppy at his feet and the Christmas tree on his left. The word "Solebury" appears along the bottom. Last season's holiday tile sold out in just eight days, so stop by to purchase yours soon!

These tiles are crafted from white clay and covered with a shining green glaze. A bright red ribbon for easy hanging and a padded gift box for easy wrapping are included with each purchase. This tile is lightweight and perfect for hanging anywhere, or as a gift during the holiday season.

Stop by the Township Office at 3092 North Sungan Road in Solebury, to purchase your limited-edition tile, while supplies last. Hours are 8:00 a.m. to 4:00 p.m., Monday through Thursday.

All proceeds benefit the Solebury Township Parks and Recreation Department's "Art in the Parks" initiative.



Township Directory

Police:

Emergency? Dial: 9-1-1. Nonemergency? Call: 215-297-8201.
General Inquiries: Police2@soleburytpd.org

Administration:

Township Number: 215-297-5656
General Inquiries: soleburytownship@soleburytpw.org

Township Manager Christopher Garges:

soleburymanager@soleburytpw.org

EAC Administrator Debra McFadden:

dmcfadden@soleburytpw.org

HARB Administrator Zachary Zubris:

zzubris@soleburytpw.org

LPC Administrator, Planning Commission Administrator

Jean Weiss: jweiss@soleburytpw.org

Parks & Recreation Director Dudley Rice:

soleburyparks@soleburytpw.org

Right-To-Know Officers

Administrative Records: Jean Weiss,
soleburymanager@soleburytpw.org
Police Records: Police Chief Dominick Bellizzi,
police@soleburytpd.org

Board of Supervisors

Chair Mark Baum Baicker

mbaumbaicker@soleburytpw.org

Vice-Chair John Francis

jfrancis@soleburytpw.org

Supervisor Hanna Howe

hhowe@soleburytpw.org

Supervisor Robert A. McEwan

rmcewan@soleburytpw.org

Supervisor Kevin Morrissey

kmorrissey@soleburytpw.org

Township Calendar

Calendar information is subject to changes.

Confirm all dates and times with the Township office.

Meetings begin at 7 p.m. unless otherwise noted.

January

- 1/3 9:30 a.m. Board of Supervisors Reorganization
- 1/5 9:30 a.m. Board of Supervisors Work Session: Priorities
- 1/9 Planning Commission
- 1/10 Environmental Advisory Council
- 1/11 Zoning Hearing Board (As Needed)
- 1/12 6 p.m. Historical Architectural Review Board
- 1/17 6 p.m. Board of Supervisors
- 1/19 6 p.m. Land Preservation Committee
- 1/25 202 Property Advisory Committee
- 1/26 Parks & Recreation Board
- 1/31 Solebury Farm Committee

February

- 2/2 6 p.m. Human Relations Commission
- 2/6 6 p.m. Historical Architectural Review Board
- 2/7 9:30 a.m. Board of Supervisors
- 2/8 Zoning Hearing Board (as needed)
- 2/13 Planning Commission
- 2/14 Environmental Advisory Council
- 2/16 6 p.m. Land Preservation Committee
- 2/21 6 p.m. Board of Supervisors
- 2/22 202 Property Advisory Committee
- 2/23 Parks & Recreation Board

March

- 3/2 6 p.m. Human Relations Commission
- 3/6 6 p.m. Historical Architectural Review Board
- 3/8 Zoning Hearing Board (As Needed)
- 3/9 9:30 a.m. Board of Supervisors
- 3/13 Planning Commission
- 3/14 Environmental Advisory Commission
- 3/16 6 p.m. Land Preservation Committee
- 3/21 6 p.m. Board of Supervisors
- 3/22 202 Property Advisory Committee
- 3/23 Parks & Recreation Board
- 3/28 Solebury Farm Committee

Stay on top of meeting times with email alerts!

Visit: SoleburyTwp.org and click "Email Notices."