

SOLEBURY TOWNSHIP BOARD OF SUPERVISORS
October 3, 2023 – 6:00 P.M.
Solebury Township Hall/Virtual - Hybrid Meeting
BUDGET MEETING MINUTES

Attendance: Mark Baum Baicker, Chair, Hanna Howe, Vice-Chair, John S. Francis, Robert McEwan, Kevin Morrissey, Christopher Garges, Township Manager, Michele Blood, Assistant Township Manager, and Catherine Cataldi, Secretary. Mark L. Freed, Township Solicitor was also in attendance.

The recording device was turned on.

I. The meeting was called to order followed by the Pledge of Allegiance.

II. Approval of Bills Payable – September 28, 2023

Res. 2023-129 – Upon a motion by Mr. Morrissey, seconded by Mr. McEwan, the list of Bills Payable dated September 28, 2023 was unanimously approved as prepared and posted.

III. Approval of Meeting Minutes – September 19, 2023 Meeting

Res. 2023-130 – Upon a motion by Ms. Howe, seconded by Mr. Morrissey, the Minutes of the September 19, 2023, meeting were unanimously approved as prepared and posted.

IV. Supervisor Comment

- Mr. Baum Baicker announced the Certificate of Recognition presented to Solebury Township by Delaware Valley Workers' Compensation Trust for exemplary achievement and leadership in minimizing workplace injuries and illness during 2022.
- Mr. Baum Baicker commented on volunteering opportunities through Carversville Farm Foundation (www.carversvillefarm.org).
- Mr. Baum Baicker commented on Mr. Garges' attendance at the third meeting of the New Hope Solebury School Districts Comprehensive Plan update project on September 20, 2023.
- Mr. Baum Baicker commented on Mr. Garges and Ms. Blood's attendance at the Career Pathways Event for New Hope Solebury School District on September 27, 2023.

V. Announcements / Resignations / Appointments

Executive Session

Mr. Baum Baicker announced that an Executive Session was held directly prior to the Board of Supervisors meeting discussing Land Preservation and Personnel Matters.

VI. Public Hearings

Historical Architectural Review Board – Certificate of Appropriateness – Mark Worth (TMP# 41-030-002, 2610 River Road)

Upon a Motion by Larry Peseski, seconded by Patrick Strzelec, it was agreed to accept the application with the following conditions:

1. *The applicant is granted approval and authorized to dismantle the arch, specifically as follows:*
 - a. *The arch must be restored and the replacement process must be commenced within 2 years' time;*
 - b. *Prior to commencing dismantling, the applicant shall make molds of the structure details to capture as many and as much detail as possible;*
 - c. *Prior to rebuilding the archway, the applicant shall present detailed plans and sketches to the HARB for approval.*
2. *The replacement of the south window is approved to match the existing wood, painted windows.*
3. *More detail must be provided in the future for carriage doors, chimney cap, and shutters as part of a continued application.*

Res. 2023-131 – Upon a motion by Mr. Francis, seconded by Mr. Morrissey, it was unanimously agreed to authorize the Certificate of Appropriateness to TMP # 41-030-002, 2610 River Road, as per the recommendations from the Historical Architectural Review Board. Issuance of the Certificate of Appropriateness does not relieve the applicant from obtaining any and all applicable permits prior to commencement of work.

Historical Architectural Review Board – Certificate of Appropriateness – Sue & Jonathan Wiedorn (TMP # 41-004-009, 4224 Wismer Road)

Upon a Motion by Patrick Strzelec, seconded by Marnie Newman, the board voted to unanimously approve the application as presented with the following condition:

1. *The front door may either be stained or painted black*

Claire Donahue, resident, questioned the property address for this application.

Res. 2023-132 – Upon a motion by Mr. Baum Baicker, seconded by Ms. Howe, it was unanimously agreed to authorize the Certificate of Appropriateness to TMP # 41-004-009, 4224 Wismer Road, as per the recommendations from the Historical Architectural Review Board. Issuance of the Certificate of Appropriateness does not relieve the applicant from obtaining any and all applicable permits prior to commencement of work.

VII. Budget

Administration and Public Works – Christopher Garges, Michele Blood and Christopher Clewell

Mr. Garges, Ms. Blood and Mr. Clewell present the 2024 Preliminary Budget Proposal (copy of which is attached). The presentation included: An overview of services; five-year revenue; summary of real estate & earned income tax revenue vs. total revenue; five-year expense; capital budget overview; and 2023 accomplishments.

VIII. Public Comment

- Claire Donahue, resident, commented on the deterioration of 6695 Greenhill Road and questioned if there was an alternative use for the property.

IX. Adjournment

The meeting was adjourned at 6:58 pm.

Respectfully submitted,
Catherine Cataldi, Secretary



Solebury

a natural choice

2024 Preliminary Budget Proposal



Overview of Services



Public Works

Maintains, repairs, and improves the infrastructure of the Township. Performs fleet maintenance.

Parks & Recreation

Enhances the quality of life in the Township by providing safe, well-maintained parks and public places as well as recreational programs & events.



Planning & Land Preservation

Handles all subdivision & land development applications and oversees the Township's Land Preservation Program.

Administration, Finance & Sustainability

Oversees public outreach & manages accounting, annual audits, human resources, payroll, and financial reports. Manages the Township's sustainability efforts.



Police

Committed to the prevention of crime & the protection of life and property; preservation of peace, order & safety; the enforcement of laws & ordinances; & safeguarding of constitutional guarantees.

Zoning & Permitting

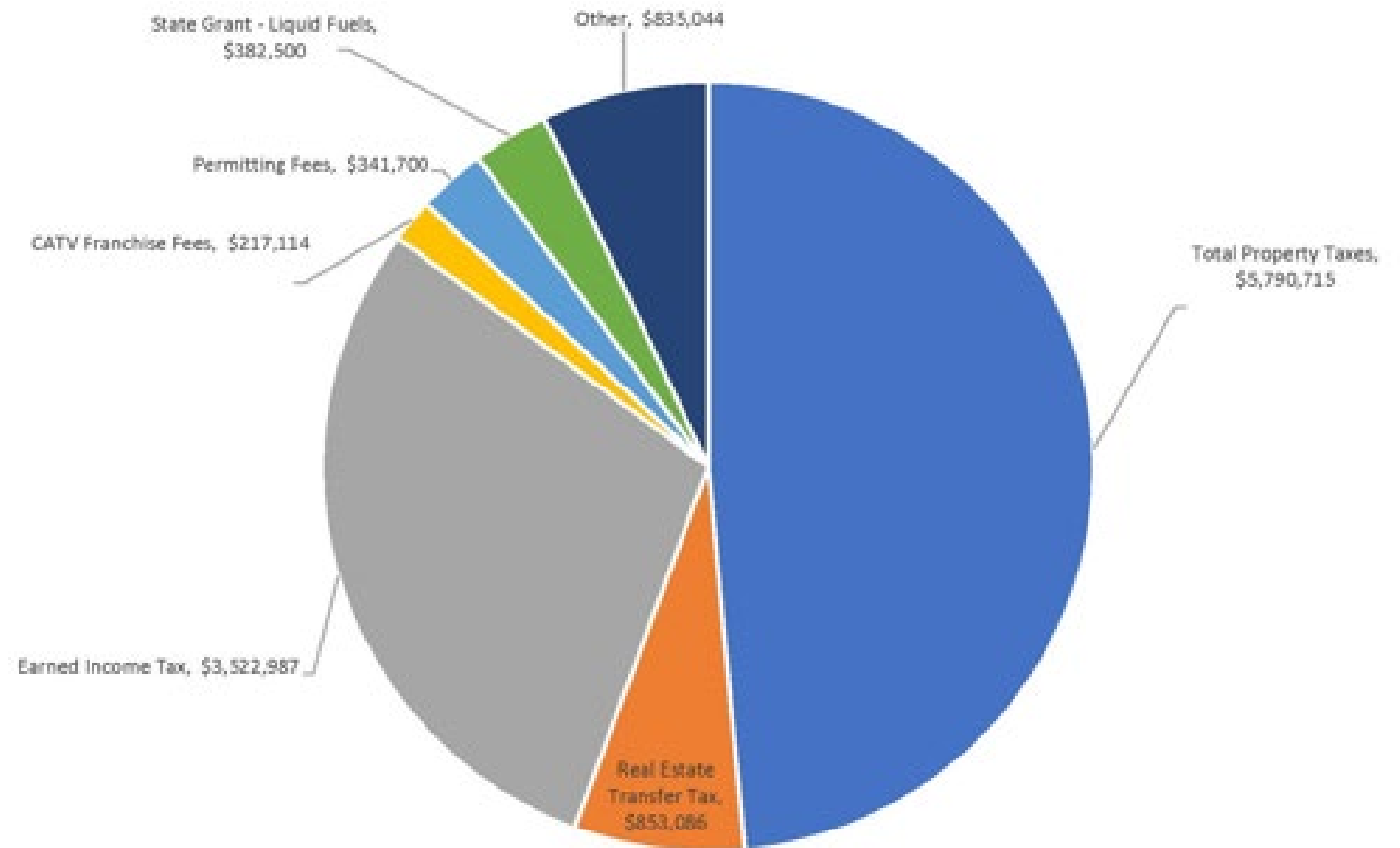
Handles all residential and commercial permits, future development and ensures compliance with the Township ordinances.



REVENUE

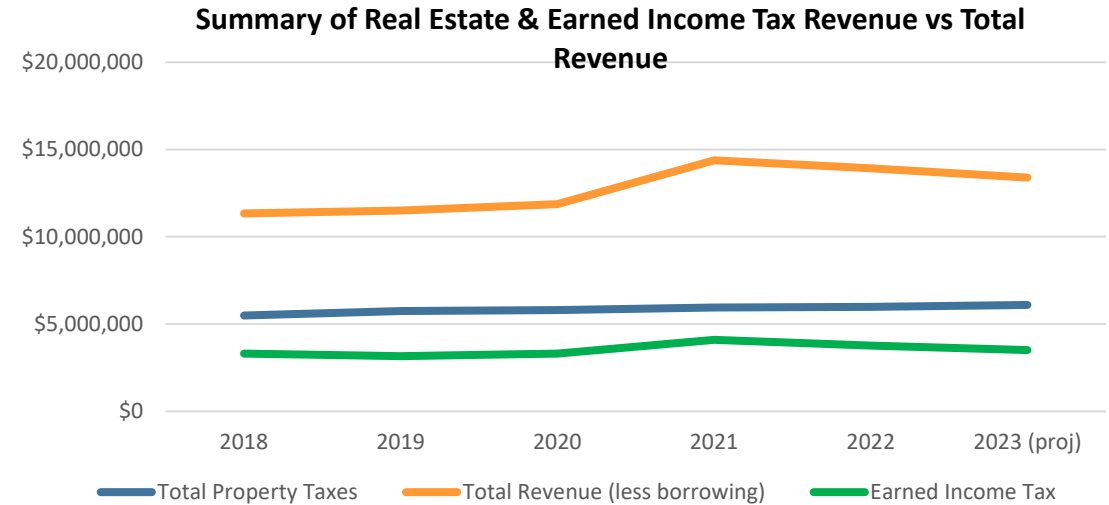
- Estimated 2023 revenue is \$13,393,687
- Peak revenue in 2021 of \$14,385,460
- Projected 2024 revenue similar to 2023
- 75% of all revenue generated by two sources, earned income tax (\$3.5M) and real estate tax (\$6M)
- Third largest source is real estate transfer fees (\$700k)
- Other sources include Liquid Fuels reimbursements (\$370k), permitting (\$300k) and cable TV franchise fees (\$200K)

5 YEAR REVENUE CATEGORIES (2018 – 2022)



- **The 2024 Budget does not require a tax increase, and the real estate tax millage allocation will remain constant to meet expenditure requirements.**

Prop. Tax Allocations	Mills	Collections	% of total
General Fund	8.5000	\$ 2,058,026.89	34.26%
Fire Fund	1.7500	\$ 423,711.42	7.05%
Debt Service Fund	13.1290	\$ 3,178,804.13	52.92%
Library Fund	0.4910	\$ 118,881.32	1.98%
EMS	0.9402	\$ 227,641.99	3.79%
	24.8102	\$ 6,007,065.75	100.00%



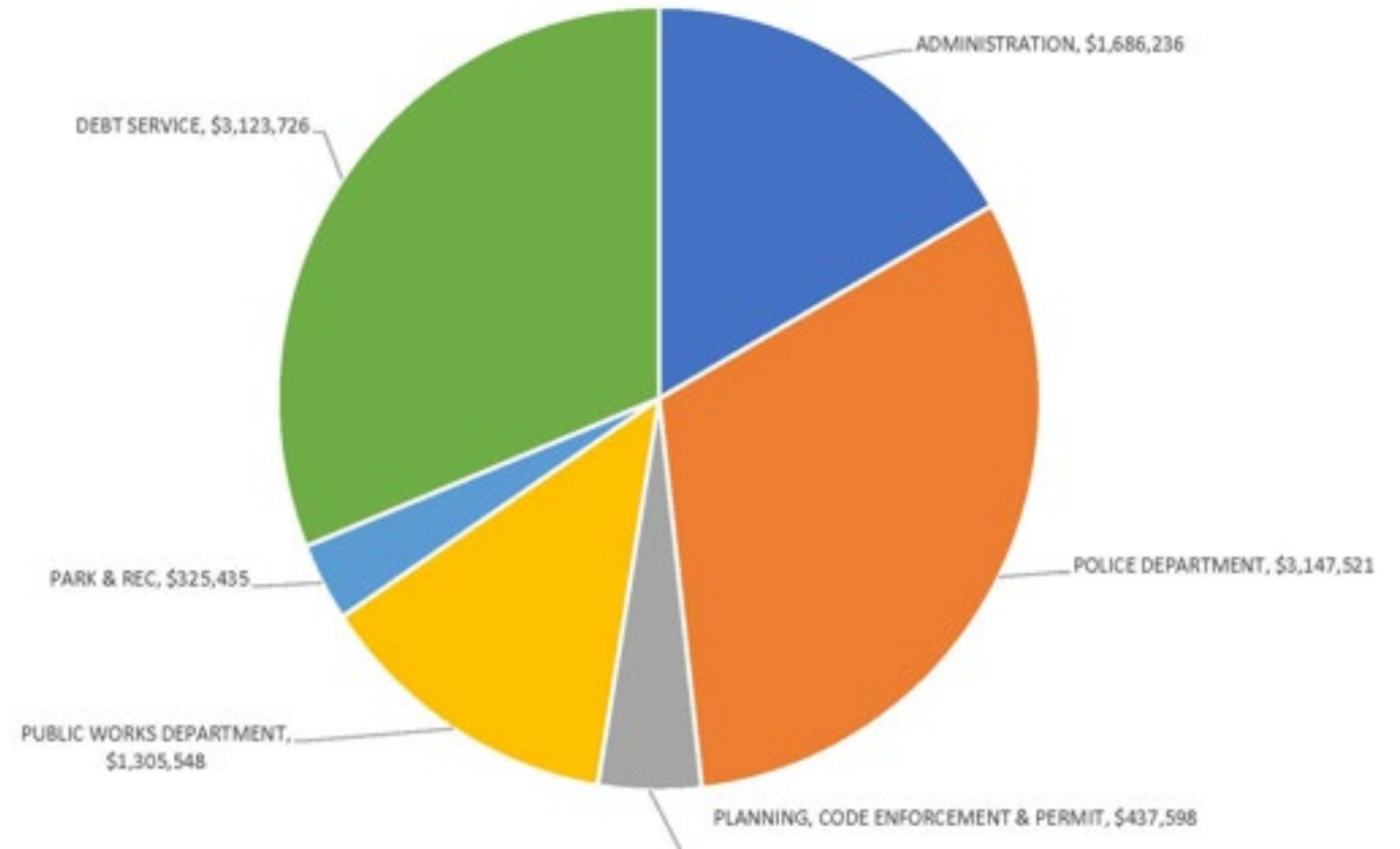
- **Tax collected over the past five calendar years. In that period of time, the total tax collected for these two line items has increased at an average rate of just over 2% per year.**



EXPENDITURES

- General operating expenses of \$6.9M
- Debt service expenses of \$3.3M
- 2024 draft budget continues same level of services currently provided
- Due to increases in expenses associated with labor, materials and equipment there is a \$350,000 reduction in interfund transfers

5 YEAR EXPENSE CATEGORIES (AVG 2018 – 2022)



CAPITAL BUDGET OVERVIEW

2024 Preliminary Budget - Capital Spending Summary

Fund 07 Sustainability						
FUNDING SOURCE		2024	2025	2026	2027	2028
Projected fund balance		\$517,087	\$231,345	\$191,845	\$171,845	-\$3,155
DCNR Grant		\$400,000				
DCED Grant		\$464,758				
Transfer from Capital Reserve		\$336,000	\$700,000	\$650,000	\$900,000	\$0
	Total funds available:	\$1,717,845	\$931,345	\$841,845	\$1,071,845	-\$3,155
PROJECT / EXPENSE	DESCRIPTION	2024	2025	2026	2027	2028
Professional Services	Sustainability consultant	\$75,000	\$50,000	\$50,000		
Recycling Event	Requested by EAC	\$12,000				
Climate Mitigation	Solar project		\$500,000			
Electric Charging Stations - Twp Bldg	2025 construction in conjunction w/ DVRPC grant (if awarded)	\$1,000	\$21,000	\$1,500	\$1,500	\$1,500
Gateway Trail III - Construction	Bid in early 2024	\$1,200,000				
Paunacussing Cr-Steam Bank Mitigation	Earmark - pending outcome of NPS study currently underway			\$250,000	\$750,000	
Route 202 Pedestrian Trail Gap Study	ASP to Logan Sq - study/plan/design/permit 2024-2025, construction 2026 - 2027	\$30,000	\$50,000	\$250,000	\$250,000	
Deer Management Program	Continuation of deer mgmt / red tag program	\$65,000	\$65,000	\$65,000	\$65,000	\$65,000
Herd Reduction	Pending data, reduced scope 2025-2026	\$70,000	\$25,000	\$25,000		
Drone Study - Deer		\$8,500	\$8,500	\$8,500	\$8,500	\$8,500
Deer Processing	Pending data, reduced scope 2025-2026	\$25,000	\$20,000	\$20,000		
	Total expenses:	\$1,486,500	\$739,500	\$670,000	\$1,075,000	\$75,000
	Balance:	\$231,345	\$191,845	\$171,845	-\$3,155	-\$78,155



2024 Preliminary Budget - Capital Spending Summary

Fund 20 Capital Projects						
FUNDING SOURCE		2024	2025	2026	2027	2028
Projected fund balance		\$987,412	\$586,477	\$561,436	-\$438,564	-\$2,423,564
DCED LSA Grant		\$100,000	\$18,959			
Transfer from Capital Reserve		\$175,000	\$536,000			
Total funds available:		\$1,262,412	\$1,141,436	\$561,436	-\$438,564	-\$2,423,564
PROJECT / EXPENSE		2024	2025	2026	2027	2028
Paving Projects @ Township Parks	(Pat Livezy lower lot)				\$35,000	
PW Storage Building	Design 2024, construction 2025	\$25,000	\$350,000			
Storage Area for Solebury Park (Roeser)					\$50,000	
Route 202 Property Concept	Design, permitting 2024-2025, construction 2026?	\$50,000	\$50,000	\$1,000,000		
Route 202/Lower Mtn Intersctn. Improv.	Design / permitting 2024-2025, construction 2027?	\$110,000	\$30,000		\$1,900,000	
Aquetong / Rt. 202 Intersctn. Improv.	Prelim Design 2024, seeking funding for future construction	\$122,000				
Website Redesign		\$26,000				
Zoning/Planning Office Redesign & Construction		\$166,210				
Building / HVAC Updates	Estimated guess, awaiting results of energy audit report	\$150,000	\$150,000			
Twp Bldg Fire Safety Improvements	Installation of additional fire detection in municipal building.	\$26,725				
Total expenses:		\$675,935	\$580,000	\$1,000,000	\$1,985,000	\$0
Balance:		\$586,477	\$561,436	-\$438,564	-\$2,423,564	-\$2,423,564
Fund 21 Capital Reserve						
FUNDING SOURCE		2024	2025	2026	2027	2028
Projected fund balance		\$3,390,888	\$2,879,888	\$1,643,888	\$993,888	\$93,888
Transfer from General Fund						
Total funds available:		\$3,390,888	\$2,879,888	\$1,643,888	\$993,888	\$93,888
PROJECT / EXPENSE		2024	2025	2026	2027	2028
Transfer to Sustainability Projects Fund		\$336,000	\$700,000	\$650,000	\$900,000	
Transfer to Capital Projects Fund		\$175,000	\$536,000			
Total expenses:		\$511,000	\$1,236,000	\$650,000	\$900,000	\$0
Balance:		\$2,879,888	\$1,643,888	\$993,888	\$93,888	\$93,888



2024 Preliminary Budget - Capital Spending Summary

Fund 22 Capital Equipment Fund						
FUNDING SOURCE		2024	2025	2026	2027	2028
Projected fund balance		\$672,339	\$454,839	\$140,839	\$48,839	\$69,839
Proceeds from sale of equip.		\$10,000	\$10,000	\$10,000	\$10,000	\$10,000
Transfer from General Fund		\$100,000	\$250,000	\$250,000	\$250,000	\$250,000
	Total funds available:	\$782,339	\$714,839	\$400,839	\$308,839	\$329,839
PROJECT / EXPENSE	DESCRIPTION	2024	2025	2026	2027	2028
Technology	Annual maintenance , software updates. Scantek scanning files in 2024 . 2026 - MS Office Suite migration.	\$75,000	\$25,000	\$40,000	\$20,000	\$20,000
Equipment - Administration	Routine computer replacements; server upgrades (new server 2026 approx. \$20K).	\$35,000	\$20,000	\$30,000	\$20,000	\$20,000
Police Equipment	2024 - Replace handguns. Add (1) one additional portable speed sign. 2025-2027 - normal equipment turnover; 2028 - PD Radio replacement	\$25,000	\$25,000	\$25,000	\$25,000	\$200,000
Police Vehicles	Replace two vehicles per year - one possibly EV for 2024	\$135,500	\$137,000	\$140,000	\$142,000	\$146,000
Police Department Technology	\$10k added each year 2025-2028 to replace PD main server, camera server & PD back-up server.	\$22,000	\$32,000	\$32,000	\$32,000	\$32,000
Equipment - Road Department	2024 - Commerical Lawn Mower; 2025 - Pick-up Truck & Dump Truck; 2026 Commerical Chipper.	\$35,000	\$335,000	\$85,000	\$0	\$0
	Total expenses:	\$327,500	\$574,000	\$352,000	\$239,000	\$418,000
	Balance:	\$454,839	\$140,839	\$48,839	\$69,839	-\$88,161

Additional projects to note:

PROJECT / EXPENSE	DESCRIPTION	2024	2025	2026	2027	2028
Traffic signal upgrade (Fund 23)	Emergency pre-emption, battery backup, radar detection for all four signals - seeking grant funding.		\$600,000.00			
Bond House renovations (Fund 24)	Preliminary design commenced 2023, potential renovations 2025-2026		\$200,000.00	\$200,000.00		
	Total expenses:	\$0	\$800,000	\$200,000	\$0	\$0



2023 ACCOMPLISHMENTS

1. **Awarded over \$660,000 in grants for intersection upgrade design at Route 202 / Lower Mountain Road, extension of the Solebury Gateway Trail from Sugan Road to Kitchens Lane, and for the purchase of an electric vehicle.**
2. **The paper reduction initiative continued with the commencement of the scanning project for the property files.**
3. **The energy audit of the municipal building is nearly completed.**
4. **The Local Climate Action Plan project commenced in August with plan deliverables expected in April 2024.**
5. **The EAC Sustainability Subcommittee was created.**
6. **The Park & Recreation Board has created a subcommittee that is working on a strategy for the Bond House.**
7. **A total of seventy-three (73) new trees were planted throughout Township owned properties.**
8. **A committee was formed and tasked with providing the Board with recommended uses for the Route 202 park property. The committee has made significant progress and expects to forward its recommendation to the Board by the end of the year.**
9. **Herd reduction quantities were lower than the prior year (as expected) and will continue into 2024. The Deer Management Program will continue in an effort to sustain the reduction.**



2024 Challenges

- Economic uncertainties due to a significant increase in interest rates to combat rising inflation as well as continued supply chain disruptions and a war in Ukraine. The price of goods, materials and services continue to rise, most significantly for vehicles, fuel and asphalt.
- Insurance costs, specifically for property and cyber insurance, have risen sharply due to repetitive losses attributed to climate change weather events and an increase in cyber-attacks. The Township has also felt the effects of an aging municipal complex as several unexpected costly repairs were required in 2023.
- Hiring of a new Police Chief and contract negotiations for the upcoming Collective Bargaining Agreement.
- Planning and execution of several large projects as discussed in the Capital Budget overview.



SUMMARY

- ❖ The preliminary General Fund budget as proposed includes \$125,444 of revenue over expenditures.
- ❖ Municipal staff and elected officials are dedicated to continuing to monitor fiscal health closely and make necessary improvements to provide quality service in the most efficient and cost-effective manner possible.
- ❖ The 2024 proposed budget is presented for the Board of Supervisors' review and authorization to advertise the final budget for adoption at the December 5, 2023 meeting.
- ❖ The administration would like to thank the Department Heads and staff for their concerted effort toward preparing the draft budget.

