

SOLEBURY TOWNSHIP BOARD OF SUPERVISORS
November 6, 2014 – 4:30 P.M.
Solebury Township Hall

BUDGET WORK SESSION
MINUTES

Attendance: James Searing, Chair, Paul Cosdon, Vice-chair, Edward McGahan, Jr. and Helen Tai. Dennis H. Carney, Manager, Gretchen K. Rice, Assistant Manager, Michele Blood, Finance Director and Jonathan J. Reiss, Solicitor were also in attendance.

Absent: Robert Heath, Jr.

The work session was called to order by the Chair.

2015 Budget Discussion

The Chair opened the discussion noting that this work session was the fifth such session in preparation of the 2015 Budget. The following issues were among the items discussed:

- A projected 2014 deficit in the General Fund;
- An estimated fund balance at end of year of \$1,780,000 (down from \$1,845,000 in 2013);
- The challenge to increase revenues to secure Township finances while managing costs;
- Decisions to be made regarding trail grants, requests from the Eagle Fire Company and the Free Library of New Hope-Solebury and increased contribution to the SPCA.

The draft 2015 Budget under review reflected a 2.25 mil increase. It was noted that this increase did not include any additional appropriation decisions related to additional funding related to the trail grants, additional funding for the library, additional funding for the fire company or an increased contribution to the SPCA which had also been requested.

The Eagle Fire Company had previously attended a work session and requested a .25 mil increase in the Fire Tax to help address the unfunded mandate related to the new radio system and the purchase of a new tanker.

The Board noted that in order to obtain the \$1.5 million in trail grants, the Township must commit an additional \$140,000 toward the project, bringing the Township's total share of the project to \$225,000. If the Township does not commit to the additional \$140,000, then the \$1.5 million in grants for the trail linkages would be lost. The Chair noted that all of the surveys conducted as part of the update to the Comprehensive Plan identified additional trails and walking paths as the number one desire of Township residents.

The Bucks County SPCA has requested an increase in the Township's annual contribution to \$2,000 toward its operation for 2015.

Anticipating cuts in funding from the Commonwealth in 2015, the Free Library of New Hope-Solebury had previously submitted a request for an increase of a .25 mil in the Library Tax which would result in an increase in funding from \$60,000 to \$120,000. (Subsequent to the original request information was received that state funding would not be cut for 2015 as originally anticipated) The Library also submitted a Letter of Sustainability as requested, and signatures in support of additional funding from approximately 270 Township residents.

Following discussion and public comment, the Board indicated consensus to increase the SPCA funding to \$2,000, to commit to an additional \$140,000 toward the trails linkage project, and to increase the Fire Tax by a .25 mil as requested by the Eagle Fire Company. No consensus was indicated on the request for additional library funding. The administration was asked to revise the draft 2015 Budget based on the Board's expressed consensus for consideration at the regular meeting to follow.

The work session adjourned at 5:30 p.m.

Respectfully submitted
Gretchen K. Rice
Assistant Manager
Secretary/Treasurer