Solebury’s new annual budget requires no increase in property taxes to maintain the current level of services provided to the community, Township Manager Dennis Carney reported.

Within the unchanged total millage, the Township shifted 0.25 mills from Debt Service to the General Fund, with a goal of gradually building a General Fund reserve between 2017 and 2024. The fund is intended to provide recourse against catastrophic loss or damage, such as emergency bridge repairs caused by tropical storms and hurricanes, Dennis said.

The total property tax allocation for 2017 is shown in the table.

<p>| | |</p>
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>General Fund</td>
<td>7.8750</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Fire Fund</td>
<td>1.7500</td>
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<tr>
<td>Library</td>
<td>0.4047</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Debt Service</td>
<td>12.2803</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Total</strong></td>
<td><strong>22.3100</strong></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Police Dept.
The 2017 Police Dept. budget reflects salary increases specified in a three-year collective bargaining agreement that is in effect through December 31, 2018. The department will make a $13,600 capital expenditure in the new year for two in-car cameras, which includes software and training. Police Chief Dominick Bellizzie plans to purchase cameras for two cars per year until the full fleet is equipped with the technology. The cameras can be transferred to new vehicles when the cars are replaced, so the chief expects the cameras to adequately serve the department for 20 to 25 years.

The department also spends $80,000 in capital funds each year on the scheduled replacement of the two oldest police vehicles; the cost includes extended warranties for the new cars.

(continued on page 6)
**Township Calendar**

Calendar information is subject to last-minute changes. Confirm all dates and times with the Township office. All meetings are held at Solebury Township Hall.

### January
- 1/3 Board of Supervisors, Reorganization, 7pm
- 1/9 Historical Architectural Review Board, 7pm
- 1/9 Planning Commission, 7pm
- 1/10 Environmental Advisory Council, 7pm
- 1/17 Board of Supervisors, 7pm
- 1/19 Land Preservation Committee, 7pm
- 1/19 Parks & Recreation Board, 7pm

### February
- 2/6 Historical Architectural Review Board, 7pm
- 2/7 Board of Supervisors, 7pm
- 2/13 Planning Commission, 7pm
- 2/14 Environmental Advisory Council, 7pm
- 2/16 Land Preservation Committee, 7pm
- 2/21 Board of Supervisors, 7pm
- 2/23 Parks & Recreation Board, 7pm

**Stay on top of meeting times with email alerts!**
Visit: SoleburyTwp.org
Click “Solebury Email Alerts” and enter your email address.
A snowflake snowman is the happy herald of the 20th Winter Festival, to be held Jan. 21-29. Some exciting new events are planned to help you celebrate!

The 2017 concert and VIP Gala will be a Broadway-style show called An Evening at Odette’s, featuring entertainer Bob Egan, Odette’s alumni, special guest vocalists, and The Brian Pastor Big Band.

Solebury Parks and Recreation is sponsoring a new Hawaiian Luau to get festival goers in a tropical mood in the cold winter months. Magician Ran’D Shine, back from a Las Vegas appearance on the TV show Penn & Teller: Fool Us, will be there to perform two hours of extraordinary, strolling magic.

New Hope Park & Rec’s first Karaoke Night, emceed by Mayor Larry Keller, is sure to be a hit. DJ Rockin’ Ron will offer singers 100,000-plus song choices, and the audience will vote to award prizes.

Blues, BBQ, & NFL Playoffs is planned to appease anyone using football as an excuse to stay home! The game will air on large-screen TVs, and the Bob Lanza Blues Band will also entertain the crowd.

Restaurants participating in the first-ever Soup-A-Thon will offer $2 cups and $5 bowls of different soups for lunch and dinner. A $20 ticket lets you sample each soup and vote on a winner.

Beloved events that have drawn crowds to Winter Festival for two decades will make another encore this year, but remember to purchase tickets for all events early through winterfestival.net so you don’t find yourself left outside in the cold!

Some event details below. More at: winterfestival.net
New Ordinance Regulates Growth & Planting of Bamboo
In-Ground Planting Prohibited as of Nov. 20

I
n the fall, the Board of Supervisors unanimously adopted an ordinance that (1) regulates the growth of all invasive, nonnative bamboo planted prior to November 20, and (2) prohibits the planting of all invasive, nonnative bamboo species in the ground after that date.

The goal of the ordinance is to protect Township residents, private and public property, and indigenous plants from the spread of what is commonly known as “running bamboo.”

Responsibility for complying with the new regulation falls to the current owner and occupant of any property on which bamboo grows, “even if the bamboo has spread from an adjoining property,” the ordinance states; this includes the cost of removal or abatement of bamboo grown in violation of the ordinance.

Property owners and residents can now face fines and other penalties if they do not prevent any part of a pre-existing bamboo plant from spreading to an adjoining property or right-of-way, or from growing closer than 30 feet to the edge of a Township road or legal right-of-way.

The 30-foot limitation is designed to prevent bamboo from falling on another property or a road.

The ordinance specifies how fines and penalties are applied, the type of remediation required, and the timeframe within which corrective action must be taken when bamboo grown on a Township property violates the new ordinance.

When the Solebury Messenger went to press, the Environmental Advisory Council was gathering information on methods of bamboo removal to post on the Township website. As a first step, the advisory body recommends that property owners and residents cut down any bamboo growing within the 30-foot boundary as soon as possible.

To view the new ordinance:
1. Visit SoleburyTwp.org
2. Rest your cursor on the Government tab and select Township Administration: Ordinances.
3. Click the PDF link for the bamboo ordinance.
4. Read, print, or download the file.

Why Is Bamboo an Issue for Solebury?

Safety—Bamboo spreads rapidly through its rhizomes (roots) and can encroach on roadways, driveways, and utility lines. When it snows, bamboo tends to lay over and can quickly become a traffic hazard and obstruct access to emergency vehicles.

Environment—Bamboo is vigorous and can easily outcompete native species. Over time, an area can be taken over by bamboo, drastically altering the ecosystem.

Cost—Once established, bamboo is difficult to eradicate. It can be mowed, solarized, contained, and excavated, but if one rhizome fragment is missed, it resurfaces. Each method requires time and vigilance for success. It is best to avoid this burden by planting native alternatives.

Courtesy—Because of its rapid growth and expansion, bamboo can easily spread to neighboring properties and cross the street under paved roads! As it is notoriously difficult to manage and control, this can be a major burden, especially for someone who did not choose to plant bamboo on their property.

Concerned About Fracking?
The Board of Supervisors hired two zoning and geology consultants to provide an environmental assessment and recommendation on how the Township could best protect itself from the negative impacts of gas and oil drilling.

Stay tuned for a presentation of the results in January.

This will allow the Township to make an informed decision on how best to proceed.

Need News?
Stay informed about Township happenings by signing up for emails.

The Township sends emails about supervisor meeting agendas and minutes, community news, and other matters, such as the fall budgeting process, advisory committee openings, and the new bamboo ordinance.

To sign up, visit: soleburytwp.org and click “Solebury Email Alerts” and enter your email address.

In addition, residents may now contact individual supervisors directly using their public email addresses (see the directory on page 2).
Land Preservation Program Seeks Properties for Preservation

Solebury established the Land Preservation Committee in 1996 out of rising concern for loss of open space—especially farmland. While much has been accomplished, the need for preservation continues. The committee urges landowners to consider preservation as a financial option before choosing development.

**Historical perspective**

By 1995, Pennsylvania had already lost a quantity of farmland equal to the combined area of Connecticut and Rhode Island. In place of these farms were unchecked housing developments; roads choked with traffic; aquifers drained beyond their ability to recharge; and stormwater runoff causing uncontrolled flooding.

Perceiving these development pressures creeping closer, in 1996 Solebury passed the first referendum to help achieve its new mission: Preserving the rural character and natural resources of the Township and encouraging agriculture.

Across two decades, residents have approved four bond referenda totaling $44 million for this purpose, allowing the Township to purchase the development rights to qualifying properties, using conservation easements to limit future development and define allowable improvement of such properties.

As a result of these efforts—in combination with lands owned or conserved by the county and state, the Heritage Conservancy, and the Natural Lands Trust—roughly one-third of the Township’s 17,900 acres are protected from overdevelopment.

**Where we are today**

Today, fertile farmland, wooded slopes, streams, watersheds, scenic canals and riverbanks, picturesque villages, and low population density remain envied attributes of Solebury’s unique character and quality of life.

However, these characteristics could become threatened if key landscapes are ever considered for development.

The Land Preservation Committee strives to minimize this possibility by acquiring conservation easements to such properties. For the Township to purchase an easement, the parcel must meet criteria established by the committee. Landowners may also donate easements to Solebury for tax purposes. Each easement is tailored to the particular needs of the specific owner and property.

After an easement is placed on a property, the owner retains ownership and enjoyment of the parcel, but gives up the right to develop the property beyond what is specified in the easement, as these rights are now owned by the easement holder. If the property is sold, the easement continues to control what new owners can do into perpetuity.

**What you can do**

Over the next decade, whether additional Township properties are preserved as open space depends on Solebury landowners.

Even if you do not intend to subdivide and develop a property you own in the Township, you can preserve the property now to prevent future owners from doing so.

Also, the conservation easement you place on your property today could, at some point in the future, thwart the efforts of a developer seeking to purchase multiple properties in combination for purposes of a large-scale development.

Whether the property is 10 acres or 100 acres, you are encouraged to act now. Starting the process or gathering more information is simple: Just call Land Preservation Administrator Jean Weiss at 215-297-0347.

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**REFERENDUM RECAP**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>YEAR</th>
<th>PERCENT APPROVAL</th>
<th>AMOUNT</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1996</td>
<td>93%</td>
<td>$4 million</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1999</td>
<td>90%</td>
<td>$10 million</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2002</td>
<td>87%</td>
<td>$12 million</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2005</td>
<td>88%</td>
<td>$18 million</td>
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**Attention Residents**

Please do not blow leaves and grass clippings onto Township roads. This organic waste can clog storm drains and impede the flow of stormwater from homes, roads, and driveways. If the waste is carried by storm drains to local waterways, it can cause pollution (1) by increasing the amount of organic waste in our streams and/or (2) by carrying fertilizers, herbicides, and pesticides to the water supply.
The Township anticipates contributing an additional 10% of its 2017 Minimal Municipal Obligation of $385,120 to the police pension plan in order to defray the plan’s liability. This additional contribution will be $38,512 for 2017, and 10% of each year’s Minimum Municipal Obligation going forward.

**Parks & Recreation Dept.**

Construction of the new link in the Solebury Trail will move forward in 2017, funded by nearly $1.7 million in grants, plus $225,000 in local matching funds that were set aside in 2015-2016.

The linkage involves completing a portion of the Solebury Trail that will connect Magill’s Hill Park to Canal Park, then head south from Canal Park along River Road, where it will connect with the existing segment that runs from River Road, follows the New Hope-Solebury School District fields, and ends at Eagle Fire Co.

The Parks & Recreation Dept.’s 2017 operating budget reflects no substantive changes over 2016 levels; minor increases in administrative costs were offset by decreased maintenance costs resulting from the completion of planned improvements.

Each year, the Parks & Recreation Dept. operating budget is also offset by Summer Adventure Camp revenues and sales of Solebury tiles and license plates.

The Township’s sports programs are self-funding, with all league expenses covered by the respective organization’s registration fees. Also, local soccer and baseball organizations each contribute $6,000 per year toward Township expenses and pay for additional field maintenance out of their own funds; the football organization is charged an annual maintenance fee based on field usage.

Parks & Recreation Director Dudley Rice announced that a new partnership with NH-S Cares will continue in 2017, allowing the department to expand its Halloween Safety and Community Awareness program in local neighborhoods.

The director stresses that volunteers and partnerships are critical to the department’s success, including NH-S School District, which provides facilities for Solebury’s Summer Adventure Camp and basketball program; the Solebury School, which provides gym facilities for basketball and wrestling; Lambertville-New Hope Winter Festival, which helps support several local organizations in addition to Solebury Parks and Recreation; $225,000 will be used for milling, paving, overlay, and tar-and-chip treatments of local roads, and $80,000 will be used to complete both planned bridge repairs and repairs identified as necessary during annual bridge inspections.

**Other Capital Projects**

After construction of the new Public Works salt storage building, the Township will use approximately $30,000 of the borrowed funds, mentioned above, to convert the land on which the pole barn now sits into a grassy area or multipurpose playing field. The cost covers 1,500 cubic yards or more of topsoil, plus spreading, seeding, grading, contouring, and some flexibility for contingencies, Dennis said.

Architectural plans will be prepared in 2017 for improvements to the Police Department’s locker rooms and entrance. The remainder of the borrowed funds will be used for these improvements across 2017 and 2018.

**Other**

The Township Manager noted that the Parks and Recreation Capital Fund will support ongoing stream restoration work at Aquetong Spring Park in 2017 ($50,000). The Natural Resources Fund will support the Township’s ongoing deer management efforts ($10,000), as well as membership in the Audubon Bird Town program ($500).

Solebury will maintain its annual contribution to the Lambertville-New Hope Ambulance and Rescue Squad at $17,000 this year; will keep its contribution to Central Bucks Ambulance level at $83,000; and will increase its contribution to the Free Library of New Hope & Solebury from $92,130 to $100,000 (reflected in the millage chart on page 1).

The Township will support other local nonprofits at 2016 levels, including the Bucks County SPCA ($2,000), Central Bucks Senior Citizens ($500), and Phillips Mill Community Association ($375).
Solebury Parks and Recreation Hosts Tree Planting

A $5,739.90 Bucks County Conservation District TreeVitalize Watershed Grant—combined with the Township’s $3,217 matching contribution—supported the planting of more than 200 young native-Pennsylvania trees at Aquetong Spring Park in November.

The planting of the trees took place in a 0.64-acre open area along the north side of what is now the main stream leading from Aquetong Spring, ending about 1,000 feet east of the spring.

By planting the trees in the fertile area that was formerly lakebed, the Township is hoping to stabilize the new stream’s riparian buffer and meadow, as well as to increase the canopy around the former lakebed.

Pennsylvania Rep. Scott Petri (R-Bucks/Montgomery), who now resides in New Hope with his wife, Ellen, and their son, Drew, was one of among 22 volunteers who came out to help with the Saturday tree planting.

The Bucks County Conservation District strives to provide for the wise use, management, and development of county soil, water, and related natural resources through cooperation with public agencies, private groups, and individuals. For more about the organization, visit:

http://www.bucksccd.org

A TREEVITALIZE GRANT from the Bucks County Conservation District brought out 22 volunteers to plant roughly 200 trees at Aquetong Spring Park in November. Among them were Solebury Supervisor Jim Searing and Pennsylvania Rep. Scott Petri (R-Bucks/Montgomery), seen at left. The young trees were wrapped in mesh for a week after the initial planting (right); the mesh was then replaced with green, deer-resistant plastic tubes.
Happy New Year

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Adam D. Crews, PLS
1806 Deep Run Road
Suite B
Pipersville, PA 18947
Ph: 215-766-2477
Fx: 215-766-2399
A.Crews@CrewsSurveying.com

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