

WILKINS TOWNSHIP BOARD OF COMMISSIONERS

BUDGET MEETING, MONDAY, OCTOBER 14, 2013

The Budget Meeting of Monday, October 14, 2013 was brought to order at 6:00PM by President Sylvia J. Martinelli. A quorum was present as follows:

Mrs. Martinelli Ms. Criner
Mr. Costa Mr. Wilson Mr. Boyd

Mrs. Bradley presented the first draft of the 2014 Budget for the following funds: General, Capital Reserve, Combined Sewer, Emergency Contingency, Industrial Development Authority, Liquid Fuels, Police Pension, Retired Members Death Benefit, Bicentennial and Other.

General Fund:

The Township is expected to begin 2014 with just \$69,500 cash on hand, as opposed to the \$609,500 with which it started 2013. The Township will use the final \$460,000 in Emergency Contingency funds during 2014, absent any unforeseen additional funding streams. On an annual basis, fixed costs, or the costs that cannot be changed or eliminated absent furloughs and elimination of core services, are well over \$500,000 more than the Township's current average revenue stream.

The economic downturn and the inability of the Township to secure tax revenue similar to that provided by ProCare in the early to mid 2000's has resulted in infrastructure improvement and capital asset replacement programs being significantly underfunded. The proposed Budget provides for the acquisition of one 2014 Ford Interceptor, 2 police car cameras, twelve bullet proof vests, one 2014 Ford F550 (five year lease arrangement plus trade of existing truck), one snow plow and one Torro Z-Master Lawn Tractor. Roads proposed to be paved include Jefferson Heights and approximately one-half of Briaridge. Wallace Avenue from Powell to Ridge will receive a microchip application and Hibiscus and Beach Street Extension will be paved by the Public Works Department.

The Township was advised that health care premiums will increase by 2% in 2014. Increases associated with other insurances are not yet known, but are projected at 10% for preliminary budgeting purposes. Both the Collective Bargaining Agreement for the Wage Policy Committee (Police) and the Maintenance Employees Association (Public Works Employees) are set to expire as of December 31, 2013 and estimated wage increases based upon current negotiations are built in to the proposed budget. One new fulltime position "Property Maintenance Officer" is proposed to address legacy issues associated with the pending retirement of an existing employee. If hired, this employee would begin in June of 2014 and would receive salary and benefits commensurate with Level IV Public Works Employees.

The Proposed 2014 Budget is currently balanced with Revenues and Expenditures at \$5,131,000 or just \$26,900 more than the 2013 Budget. The 2014 budget relies upon an increase in real estate taxes of one-mill.

Capital Reserve Fund:

This account relies upon a transfer from the General Fund in the amount of \$28,900. These funds will be used to purchase and install replacement garage doors for the Public Works Department, to purchase a file server for the administration office and to pay successful prior years assessment appeals.

Combined Sewer Fund:

Three years ago, the Township was able to reduce the Sewer Users' Fee by \$0.75 per thousand gallons of water used because of the pay-off of a General Fund Obligation Note. At this time and due to the number of projects requiring funding, the fee must be restored to the previous level of \$2.50 per thousand gallons of water used. Anticipated projects for 2014 include Phase II-A of the Dowling Street sanitary sewer replacement with an estimated construction cost of \$156,000. It is anticipated that the final phase of this project will be performed in 2015 and is projected to cost an additional \$100,000. This fund is balanced with revenues and expenditures proposed at \$1,272,200.

Emergency Contingency Fund:

Dollars remaining in the Contingency Fund will be transferred to the General Fund during 2014. The total amount to be transferred is projected at \$460,000

Industrial Development Authority/IDA Fund:

The Township is currently working on the Lions Park Trail and has requested 2013 funding from the IDA Board to complete that project, including building a bridge over the stream in the ravine. This project is the first step in the proposed overall rehabilitation of Lions Park as recommended in the study that was performed by HRG several years ago. For 2014, the Township requested funding to replace the roofs on all structures (bathrooms, concession stands and pavilions) at all three parks. The IDA Fund calls for the use of \$57,100 in donated funds to complete these projects.

Liquid Fuels Fund:

The Township received notice that the estimated allocation of municipal liquid fuels from the Commonwealth Bureau of Municipal Services for 2014 will be \$128,991.23. These funds will be used to pay for applicable Public Works wages and street lighting.

Police Pension Plan:

The Pension Fund is balanced with \$436,100 in proposed revenues and expenditures. The Township's minimum municipal obligation to the Police Pension Plan is \$383,979. Anticipated state aid is \$105,000. The balance must be paid by the Township no later than December 31, 2014.

Retired Members Death Benefits (RMDB):

This fund was established to provide funding for death benefits to beneficiaries of eligible uniformed and non-uniformed retirees. On an annual basis, a transfer of \$8,050 is made from the General Fund. For 2014, the total amount of funding available for death benefits is proposed at \$120,800.

Bicentennial Fund:

This fund will be established in 2014 through a transfer of \$7,500 from the General Fund. The Township will celebrate its 200th Anniversary in 2021. Annual allocations from the General Fund are anticipated to be combined with donations received from the community to permit a celebration to be held in recognition of the Township's bicentennial.

Other Funds:

The Township maintains several other funds. Budgets for 2014 for some of these funds have not yet been prepared. These funds include:

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Wilkins Township Disaster Relief Fund: The Budget is proposed at \$1990.00, absent any additional donations.

Wilkins Township Baseball Association: This fund was opened specifically to hold donations and pay expenditures related to the Eastmont Park Ballfield Project. The current account balance is a little more than \$800. No budget has been established for 2014.

Fema Fund: This fund was established several years ago for the purpose of detailing expenditures related to a FEMA grant that the township was awarded for the acquisition and demolition of flood damaged structures. This account will be closed in late 2013 or early 2014 because the project has been substantially completed.

The Linhart Grant Fund will be used in conjunction with a \$350,000 grant received for the separation of storm and sewer sewers in the Highland Avenue neighborhoods. A budget will be established for this fund pending further discussions with the Engineer.

The meeting was adjourned at 6:52 PM.

Respectfully submitted,

Rebecca Bradley
Secretary