

WARWICK TOWNSHIP
Board of Supervisors' Public Budget Discussion Meeting Minutes
NOVEMBER 10, 2008

Members Present: Judith A. Algeo, Esq., Chair
Edward P. Thompson, Vice Chairman
John Cox, Member

Others Present: Gail Weniger, Township Manager
Tom Scott, Assistant Manager
Joseph Costello, Chief of Police
Mark Goldberg, Police Lieutenant
Lorenzo Cuoci, Director of Public Works
Katrina Harding, Dir. of Planning/Special projects

■ **CALL TO ORDER:**

The Warwick Township Board of Supervisors' November 03, 2008 public meeting, held at Warwick Township Administration Office, 1733 Township Greene, Jamison, PA., was called to order at 7:07 p.m., Chair, Judith Algeo who then led attendees in the pledge of allegiance.

■ **2009 BUDGET DISCUSSION:**

Chair Algeo announced that the budget would be reviewed page by page (exhibit).

⇒ Revenues show a decline in Real Estate Taxes collected due to both slower real estate market and numerous downward reassessments. Earned Income Taxes will also be flat for 2009. Ms. Weniger noted that the General Fund assumes the adoption of a Local Service Tax ordinance.

Mr. Thompson inquired about the \$10,000 for General Fixed Assets and Mr. Cuoci, Director of Public Works, noted that three older trucks would be auctioned next year. The expense line items were discussed, citing the numerous decreases.

Ms. Algeo asked that the newsletter be cut from quarterly to three times per year, which would save \$2,000 from the General Fund and the Parks and Recreation Fund.

It was noted by the Manager that cuts were made to reflect what bare minimum operations would look like. The numbers do not allow for any additional contingencies which would require further spending. Lt. Goldberg noted that cuts in the Police Department were also steep and reflected ideal conditions.

Ms. Weniger noted that Fire Bonus was eliminated and insurance decreased anticipating that these would come from Firehouse and Equipment Budgets. The Board members noted that they had been anticipating that happening and discussed the idea of taking the daytime bonus from the Fire Company mills. There was consensus on this and the Manager noted that she would notify the Warwick Fire Company tomorrow of the issue.

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⇒ Public Works line items were reviewed with cuts highlighted. The Manager noted that she did not want to delay having the Public Works department perform necessary work due to lack of funding for materials. Ms. Weniger commented that it is possible a major weather event would probably cause such a lean budget to go over projections.

⇒ The Capital Projects expenditures were discussed item by item noting that many had been cut and eliminated. The basin naturalization program was discussed regarding the funds being utilized from the basin reserve accounts.

⇒ Parks and Recreation budget was discussed with the Manager noting that the budget anticipates the elimination of personnel and material support of Jake's race, the elimination of the holiday celebrations including the egg hunt, Halloween happening, and the winter event, and the revising of the concert offerings to eliminate the set up and break down needs to decrease costs to allow the events to occur. It was noted that the concerts do have grant support, but the required business support of the other events is dwindling. Judith Algeo expressed concern that the event creates a sense of community and would like the Park Board to consider attempting to raise the funds and plan at least the egg hunt as a purely volunteer event. There was discussion regarding the possibility of another group running an event for the Township as is done in other municipalities.

The Park and Recreation truck purchase was reviewed and Mr. Thompson has questions regarding the increase in anticipated cost. Mr. Cuoci explained the benefit of adding utility to the vehicle, including a plow, diesel engine, and more power so the truck could be utilized more.

⇒ The Open Space fund was reviewed noting nothing new was anticipated for 2009. Ms. Weniger noted that she allowed for maintenance since there has been cost to remove trees occasionally.

⇒ The Highway Aid Fund was discussed, particularly the salt shed. Lorenzo Cuoci discussed what he was considering regarding materials. Mr. Thompson believes it could wait and there was no disagreement from this point. Ms. Weniger noted that she would remove it from the budget.

⇒ The Road Machinery Fund and purchase of a new truck was discussed, with Mr. Cuoci explaining the details of the vehicle requested. Other items discussed included stormwater pipe replacements and guardrail installations.

⇒ The Firehouse and Equipment Fund was discussed briefly. Ms. Weniger noted that this was the only large fund that had the possibility of reallocation of resources to the General Fund. She noted that the Road Machinery Fund was the other small fund available for reallocation but that it would be a short term solution. Ms. Algeo and Mr. Thompson expressed concern regarding this proposal and Mr. Cox noted that the money is being set aside for a proposed new fire company. Ms. Weniger agreed and noted that she was asked to give every possibility that would assist with the operational deficit. The Board noted that the payment of the WFC insurance and bonuses from the Firehouse fund would give some relief.

⇒ The General Obligation fund is dedicated mills for debt service. Since the mills collected go directly to the payment of the principle and interest, there was nothing else to do with this fund.

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⇒ The Capital reserve fund was provided for the sake of information but has no planned income and is only utilized for specific items noted in reserves. No comment was made on this fund.

Upon completion of the examination of the budget, the Board addressed the resident attendee, Mr. Kellaway from Nathaniel Drive, regarding his thoughts on the situation, specifically on the idea of raising taxes. Mr. Kellaway discussed with the Board the issue of school taxes being the problem, not the local taxes. He shared his experiences of living in different places and believed the local taxes here were in line. He had no objection to the two mill increase being discussed. Lt. Goldberg and Chief Costello, both employees and residents, noted that they would be impacted by both the LST and real estate increase. Lt. Goldberg stated that his involvement with the budget process assures him that the increase is needed. Chief Costello agreed.

The Manager reviewed the historical increases for operations, noting that they were only increased once since 1995, and that was for one Mill. She believed that the current budget calls for a reduction in services and to cut further would result in an unacceptable level of service. Ms. Weniger also noted that the reserves for emergencies are important to maintain and that she believes she has presented all options.

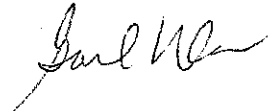
The Board members discussed the local service tax, agreeing that it would be adopted and discussed the tax increase. The manager was then given the direction to anticipate a two mill increase for the general fund.

The Board of Supervisors thanked the staff and the Manager for their time and effort with the process.

■ **ADJOURNMENT:**

The November 10, 2008, Warwick Township Board of Supervisors' public meeting was adjourned at 9:10 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,



Gail V. Weniger,
Township Manager/Secretary

These minutes were approved at the
Board of Supervisors' meeting held: **November 17, 2008**

