

HALFMOON TOWNSHIP BOARD OF SUPERVISORS
BUDGET MEETING MINUTES

OCTOBER 17TH, 2022
PAGE 1 OF 3

1. **CALL TO ORDER**

Chair David Piper called the meeting to order at 7:00 p.m. (present at Community Center). Other Supervisors present were Chuck Beck (present at Community Center); Ron Servello (present at Community Center); Patti Hartle (present at Community Center) and Rose Ann Hoover (present at Community Center). Staff present were Amy Smith, Township Secretary (present at Community Center); Brett Laird, Township Treasurer (present at Community Center); Jim Smith, Public Works Lead (present at Community Center) and Chuck Beck, Public Works Laborer (present at Community Center). Residents & others in attendance: Virginia Squier (present by Community Center); Donnan Stoicovy (present by Community Center) and Cheryl Barr (present by Zoom).

2. **CITIZEN COMMENTS**

There were no citizen comments.

3. **APPROVAL OF AGENDA**

- **MOTION: Mr. Servello moved to approve the agenda; Ms. Hartle seconded; Vote 5-0-0; Motion Carried.**

4. **PRELIMINARY DRAFT 2023 BUDGET**

Mr. Laird requested clarification on whether the board wanted to keep the fire tax as a separate levy or pay the contractual amount and any capital fund requests out of the General Fund. Mr. Laird explained the 1.7 mils collected for fire protection services would be applied to the General Fund and those expenditures would be paid through the General Fund. Mr. Servello stated that only half of the millage collected for the fire tax goes to fulfilling the contractual obligations. Ms. Hoover commented that if the fire tax millage was moved to the General Fund, then there would be more flexibility. Mr. Servello stated he does not want to collect and have a significantly large surplus in the fire protection fund. Mr. Piper suggested reducing the fire tax to the contractual millage rates. Ms. Hartle stated the fire tax helps the Fire Companies feel better and helps explain the tax supports the Fire Companies. Mr. Servello commented that Halfmoon Township still pays a proportionate share to the Port Matilda Fire Company. Ms. Hartle commented it protects and earmarks these funds. Mr. Servello stated this can also be done through fund budgeting and commented there needs to be an annual contract for each Fire Company. Ms. Hoover questioned whether the fire tax dissuades citizens to help fund the Fire Companies with additional private funding. Mr. Servello questioned whether there was an approved budget provided by the Fire Companies to review and consider for budget discussion purposes. Mr. Laird stated an approved budget has not been provided.

- **MOTION: Ms. Hoover moved to remove the fire tax and add the 1.7 mils into the General Account; Mr. Servello seconded; Mr. Servello commented that no other municipality in the Upper Bald Eagle Halfmoon COG has a fire tax; Ms. Hartle stated that none of the other UBEH COG municipalities fund the fire Company adequately; Mr. Servello commented that Fire Companies are essential services and he wants to support them but he wants to support them reasonably, fairly and equably; Vote 3-2-0; Ms. Hoover, yea; Mr. Servello, yea; Mr. Beck, yea; Mr. Piper, nay; Ms. Hartle, nay; No abstentions; Motion Carried.**

Mr. Laird stated the contractual obligations and truck payment will be accounted for in the General Fund under Public Safety.

Mr. Laird stated that based off the discussion and direction at the October 13th Board of Supervisors meeting he added funds for a working supervisor.

Mr. Laird commented since there were mixed opinions on the Manager position, he projected a salary for 520 hours at \$29.40 per hour for a quarter of a year to use as a placeholder. Ms. Hartle questioned whether there was a place in the budget to pull more funds if needed. Mr. Laird responded that more funds could be pulled from the unencumbered funds.

Mr. Piper stated he did not feel that a codification would be needed in 2024 and requested this amount to be decreased. Ms. Hartle questioned whether revisions to Ordinances would be legal without a codification. Ms. Smith explained that the board could adopt Ordinance revisions which would make them legal and enforceable and if not codified would go under new laws in the Township Code until such time the board chooses to codify them.

Mr. Laird & Ms. Hartle stated the Centre Region Council of Governments will be decreased but that figure is not known yet.

Mr. Piper stated he and Ms. Hoover met with members of the Port Matilda EMS and they are not in good shape. Ms. Hoover stated they are \$26,000-\$29,000 short. Ms. Hoover commented that they are short on volunteers and those that are paid work for \$11.00 an hour 24/7/365 with no benefits. Mr. Servello questioned whether they have a budget they follow and if the public understands the problem. Ms. Hoover stated they do offer training without it coming out of the volunteer's pocket. Mr. Servello stated he would like to see a budget in front of him to show we need to do something. Mr. Piper stated the insurance companies send the payments to the patient and not the service provider and the patients are keeping that money and not turning it over to the PMEMS. Mr. Piper stated the Commonwealth of PA could enforce the issue, but they do not. Mr. Servello commented the donation has been flat the last several years. Mr. Piper recommended increasing the donation to \$14,000. Mr. Servello questioned whether the PMEMS could come and present their needs.

Mr. Piper requested that the line items for Public Works Crew Lead Salary & Public Works Laborer salaries be combined into one line item. Ms. Hartle questioned who would be in charge this winter and whether someone should be appointed to the Roadmaster position. Ms. Hartle requested the Lead position be budgeted a \$22.00 for the whole year and the Laborer position be budgeted at \$21.00 for the whole year. Mr. Servello questioned whether someone would be appointed January 1, 2023 to the Lead position. Ms. Hartle questioned who would lead for winter maintenance in November & December. Mr. Smith stated winter maintenance would be addressed for November & December.

Mr. Laird stated there are still uncommitted funds currently in the Fire Fund and there will be delinquent taxes collected in 2023. Mr. Servello commented that he would like to see approved budgets from the Fire Companies, so the board has something to work with when budgeting.

Mr. Piper stated he would like to see the transfer cut from \$50,000 to \$25,000 for the Park & Recreation transfer. Ms. Hartle stated she would like to start transferring monies into this fund so park equipment or park projects can be properly funded. Supervisor Beck stated they estimated a new location for an ice rink at \$60,000. Mr. Servello stated the ice rink could be put back on the tennis court and repairs could be made. Mr. Servello stated it may be cheaper to pay for the repairs to the tennis court than pay for the construction & maintenance of another location. Mr. Piper agreed that it would be cheaper to repair the tennis court. The board agreed to put \$16,000 in the budget to transfer into the Park & Recreation fund.

The board reviewed their top five deficit spending projects. Mr. Laird stated the average of those projects included paying off the loans for Autumn Meadow Park & Western Star, purchasing a backhoe and fixing the Municipal Building roof. Ms. Squier stated that water mitigation around the Municipal Building should be a high priority. There was discussion on whether to pay off a portion of park loan debt and continue to make payments since the interest rate is low. Mr. Servello stated he did not want to have a huge surplus and carry debt. Mr. Servello questioned whether a deposit was needed for the backhoe. Mr. Beck will inquire.

The board agreed to transfer \$75,000 into capital reserve.

Mr. Piper stated he would like to see a tax decrease. Ms. Hartle stated she would like to see another year with the current tax rate before discussing a tax decrease. Ms. Hartle commented she was concerned that if the board decreased taxes too soon, they may need to increase them in a few years and does not want to see this fluctuate. Supervisor Beck stated he would also like to see a tax decrease even if it is just a little decrease. Ms. Hoover & Mr. Servello agreed that if a tax decrease is possible, they would like to see that happen.

- **MOTION: Mr. Servello moved to have staff put the backhoe on order if there is no down payment and if a down payment is needed, then bring it back to the board to discuss another funding source; Supervisor Beck seconded; Vote 5-0-0; Motion Carried.**

5. ADJOURNMENT

There being no further business before the board, the regular meeting was adjourned at 8:26 p.m.

HALFMOON TOWNSHIP BOARD OF SUPERVISORS
BUDGET MEETING MINUTES

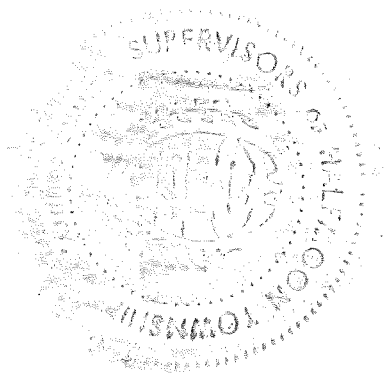
OCTOBER 17TH, 2022
PAGE 3 OF 3

- **MOTION:** *Mr. Servello moved to adjourn the meeting at 8:26 p.m.; Mr. Beck seconded; Vote 5-0-0; Motion Carried.*

Respectfully submitted,



Amy M. Smith,
Township Secretary



This page was
intentionally
left blank