

BUCKINGHAM TOWNSHIP

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BUCKINGHAM TOWNSHIP Board of Supervisors Work Session Agenda October 9, 2024 4:00 p.m.

2025 Budget Preparation

Buckingham Township Board of Supervisors
Work Session
Minutes

The work session of the Buckingham Township Board of Supervisors was held October 9, 2024 in the Township Building, 4613 Hughesian Drive, Buckingham, Pennsylvania.

Present:	Jon Forest	Chairman
	Maggie Rash	Vice-Chairman
	Paul Calderaio	Member
	Dana S. Cozza	Township Manager
Not Present:	Daniel Gray	Township Engineer
	Craig A. Smith, Esquire	Township Solicitor
	Luke Rosanova	Bucks County Planning Commission
	Gary Weaver	Township Water/Wastewater Consultant

The work session began at 4:00 p.m.

Budget – Water and Wastewater Department

Mr. Clark, Director of the Water and Wastewater Department, was present along with Mrs. Pistory, Director of the Finance Department, to discuss the projected 2025 budget.

Water Fund – Operating Expenses

- Repair/Maintenance – Land. Mr. Clark explained that because of the weather, there were additional expenditures. He said they have budgeted for more in 2025 in case this happens again.
- Building Repair/Maintenance. Mr. Clark said the Coles building needed repairs which were estimated at \$7,000, but will actually be only \$5,600.
- Small Tools/Minor Equipment. Mr. Clark said they will be reducing this item from \$20,000 to \$10,000 and will be recoding the line item as they are doing a better job of specifying machine repair, electrical or something specific.
- Engineering/Architectural Services. Mr. Clark said the engineering services amount will be increased.

Mr. Calderaio asked if the aggressive past due collecting has been effective, and Mrs. Pistory said no, as she needs the procedures from the solicitor in order to file in small claims court. Mr. Forest said the form is online, and up to \$12,500 can be filed for claiming in small claims court, but more than that would be a Sheriff's sale or a lien. Mrs. Pistory said township staff does file liens on properties, and noted the lien is sent via certified mail which is quite expensive.

- Laboratory Service. Mr. Clark explained an increase of \$10,000 in the budget to correct from previous years when the lab has historically been late to submit their invoices. Mrs. Pistory noted there also is more testing done now.

- Repair/Maintenance – Machinery. Mr. Clark explained an increase of \$20,000 in this budget item as this year they spent \$20,000 on pump repairs, and the new generator contract just came in at \$26,000 (Mrs. Pistory noted some of this comes from the General Fund).

Water Fund General

- Operating Supplies – Chemicals. Mr. Clark noted there is a 9% increase as the township is buying more chemicals for corrosion control since interconnecting with Buckingham Village.
- Management Consultant. Mr. Clark explained this is a new line item as the township has hired a Public Relations firm to assist in educating our residents about the DEP mandated water treatment requirements due to levels of PFOS, and has budgeted \$15,000.
- Advertising/Printing/Binding. Mr. Clark said this item increased due to the education of our residents on the DEP mandated water treatment requirements due to levels of PFOS.
- DEP Annual Permit Fees. Mr. Clark said this item has been increased due to the rise in DEP permit fees.

Water Capital Plan

- Interconnection between Fieldstone and Cold Spring Construction Contract. \$1,750,000. Mrs. Cozza explained that combining the systems will reduce cost as there will be fewer permits needed and one less system to be tested for requirements. She explained that ARPA money will be used to fund this interconnection, with the bid scheduled to be awarded in December 2024. Mrs. Cozza said the township has to take the Fieldstone wells offline due to PFOS levels. Mrs. Cozza explained that when the bid has been prepared by Gary Weaver, more details will be available.

Rate Increases: Mrs. Cozza explained that in year 2025 the water rates will need to be increased and districts will be combined. The increase in water rates is necessary in order to pay for the required DEP mandated water treatment requirements due to levels of PFOS. Mrs. Pistory noted the township will borrow \$5 million dollars in a bond to help pay for the water treatment upgrades, which are expected to be \$10-\$12 million dollars over the next 4 years. Mr. Clark said there may be federal or state grant money available to assist.

Wastewater – Capital Projects

- Cold Spring WWTP (100,000 gpd) OR New Sprayfield (land purchase and construction). Mr. Clark explained the township pushed design out to year 2029 for this item as shown on the budget. He said there are quotes for preliminary work on the new sprayfield, but legal matters need to be settled before continuing.

- Upgrades to the Wastewater Treatment Plant and Pump Station 6. Mr. Clark explained these items have been bumped to 2026 as negotiations are underway with Aqua PA for a project that may contribute towards the cost of the upgrades.
- Lagoon Dredging. Mr. Clark said this continues to be bumped back as the lagoons are not at the level of sludge needed for dredging.

Mrs. Pistory confirmed there is money in the budget for the 2025 wastewater items.

Budget - Roads and Facilities Department

Mr. Hinz, Director of the Roads and Facilities Department, was present along with Mrs. Pistory, Director of the Finance Department, to discuss the projected 2025 budget.

- Maintenance. Mr. Hinz said there are some minor increases. He explained they have eliminated roadside / roadbank mowing for the most part to save on expenses.
- Sanitation – Recycling. Mrs. Pistory noted that the leaf bags previously were only purchased every 2-3 years, and now the township purchases them every year. Mr. Forest said it's over 8,000 bags. Mr. Hinz said the leaf bags plus pick up with rental of trash trucks costs \$12,000 just for one pick up, and the township currently does this twice a year. Mrs. Pistory explained when the leaf pick up program began, the township had a recycling grant from DEP, however the township has not received the grant for at least 10 years as DEP will not award it to a township that allows open burning. Mrs. Cozza said that some municipalities have stopped collecting the leaves. Mr. Hinz added the township rents a grinder to process the bagged leaves which costs \$5,000. Mrs. Pistory said the township also rents two trash trucks to collect the bagged leaves. Mr. Calderaio asked what happens to the ground leaves, and Mr. Hinz said the township uses it as needed, and Mrs. Cozza replied on clean up days residents may come and take what they want.

Mr. Hinz observed that more residents use the fall clean-up days than in the spring. He said 6-7 dumpsters are rented for each event. Mr. Hinz recommended not allowing tire disposal at the events due to the expense of disposing of them.

Mrs. Cozza recommended eliminating the springtime cleanup, and limiting residents to only 20 free leaf bags per person in the fall as there are people who repeatedly return for 20 more bags and seem to be taking advantage of the free bags. The Board agreed to cut back to only one pick-up and clean up day in the fall, and let the residents know in advance that the springtime event has been cancelled.

- Staffing. Mrs. Cozza noted that the staffing is good, and that the youngest members of the group went to mechanics school and are doing a great job of fixing things themselves, which has increased the cost of shop supplies but reduces sending equipment out to be repaired elsewhere.

- Capital Purchases – Minor Machinery/Equipment. Mr. Forest asked about the two electric chain saws in the budget, and Mr. Hinz said the staff loves using them so he has requested two more.
- Contracted Services. Mrs. Pistory noted the budget will change as the township has not yet awarded the mowing contract for 2025.
- Capital Purchases and Major Machinery/Equipment. Mr. Hinz requested to replace his current car with a pick-up truck which will be more useful. Mr. Hinz added that he will purchase the snowplow blade separately to save money, and will order a green truck for consistency with other trucks in the department. Mr. Hinz also requested to replace the 2001 International dump truck, which is not in service as it is rusted out, with a new dump truck complete with chassis and plow. Mrs. Pistory said \$350,000 is budgeted for the two new vehicles and they could take money from liquid fuels fund reserve and/or from the general fund. Mr. Hinz said he prefers to retain liquid fuels funds for paving and salt.
- Liquid Fuels. Mrs. Pistory said the township spent \$760,000 this year from the liquid fuels fund, and the amount provided from the state is being reduced each year due to electric cars; Mrs. Rash noted there will be an offset fee due soon by electric car users.
- Park Fund. Mrs. Cozza said the usual general maintenance is budgeted, along with improvements to the basketball court in the original section of Holicong Park, and money for the memorial grove, also in Holicong Park.

Budget – Police

Chief Scirrotto, Buckingham Township Police Department, was present along with Mrs. Pistory, Director of the Finance Department, to discuss the projected 2025 budget.

Chief Scirrotto provided a Budget Preparation presentation with highlights of what has been accomplished in 2024 and what is proposed in 2025.

- Chief Scirrotto reported he has negotiated with the Solebury Club for use of training space and has been provided with a room for scheduling classes as much as he needs for \$2,000 annually. Chief explained there is also \$5,700 budgeted for full gym memberships for all 23 sworn positions and up to 14 civilian positions, with discounts offered to employees and their immediate family members. Mrs. Cozza said if additional civilian employees wants to participate, more will be budgeted.
- Chief Scirrotto said that there are some personnel adjustments in process for some of the leadership, supervision and detective roles within the department, including more responsibilities given to the two civilian employees in order to streamline processes.
- Uniform Enhancements. Chief Scirrotto recommended the use of outer carriers for the officers as persons with smaller bodies cannot carry all of the necessary equipment on their waist. He said they improve health and wellness and are much better for the officer's comfort. The Chief also likes the use of identification patches as they won't break and are weatherproof. Chief explained that more

- functional uniforms are less than ½ the price of dress uniforms. Chief said they are trying to stay in the ballpark of the previous 2 years budgeting figures.
- Police Supplies. Chief Scirrotto requested more safety EMS items (trauma kits) as police are oftentimes the first responders. He suggested a “go-bag” for each officer for ease to sling onto their shoulder while getting to the person in need. Chief said they need to have one more AED unit plus a spare, as well as one in the station at all times. He also wants a consistently set up first aid kit for each officer, to be supplied with the basic tools and police specific tools that may be needed. Chief said \$4,500 is requested for five First Aid Kits, consisting of backpacks with supplies.
 - Dues/Subscriptions/Memberships. Chief Scirrotto explained the department is up for reaccreditation in March and previously did most of the preparation in-house, but has learned that is counterproductive and proposes that PLEAC Accreditation Assistance will be a much better use of staff by letting them do most of the work. Chief said they have proposed a three year commitment, budgeted over four years, in the total amount of \$20,600.
 - Tuition Reimbursement. Mrs. Cozza reported this item is in the police contract, and the amount is based on how well you succeed. She said there currently are two officers enjoying the benefit and more have requested to participate in 2025. Mrs. Cozza said \$21,000 is budgeted for 2025.
 - Capital Purchase – Major Equipment. Mrs. Cozza said the budget includes the replacement of two police vehicles with 2 Explorers, including upfitting. Chief recommended ordering the vehicles for expected delivery by the end of 2025. Chief said the cars are running all of the time, so the actual life of each car is longer than determining it just by the mileage.
 - Capital Purchase – Minor Equipment. Chief Scirrotto explained there are many different options and systems for body cameras, tasers, car carriers and car cameras. Chief said that after conducting research, Lt. Moffett recommends that AXON has the best package deal for bodycams and carcams, both with a cloudbased storage system, and also includes the Taser 10 program. Chief said they have recently applied for a state grant for the body cameras, and has heard of a \$50,000 grant coming out in November that they will apply for.

Chief Scirrotto recommended the department transition from 45 caliber iron-sight service guns to 9mm service guns with optics for the following reasons: the red-dot allows the officers to shoot much more accurately than iron sights, the 9mm firearm is easier to control recoil which makes follow-up shots more accurate, the ammunition with the proper grain of bullet is effective, and the 9mm grip will fit many of the officers hands better as it is smaller than the 45 caliber. He said that the 9mm Glock can be purchased with the optic installed. Chief explained the expected cost to supply the entire department with the new guns will be \$25,000 including the optic, holster and ammunition; and added they should get at least \$300 trade in for each of the current guns. Chief explained they will also be able to trade in the .45 ammunition currently inventoried for 9mm. Chief Scirrotto said

- they will have training scheduled many times in order for the officers to be proficient with the new technology.
- Salaries. Mrs. Cozza said the non-uniform salaries for the two employees in the police department and for the administrative office staff need to be re-evaluated as most of them are not up to typical salaries. She said the salaries for the police employees who have new duties will also need to be re-evaluated mid-year in 2025.

Budget – Building and Codes Department

Mr. Kettler, Director of the Code Enforcement Department, was present along with Mrs. Pistory, Director of the Finance Department, to discuss the projected 2025 budget.

- Management Consulting Services. Mr. Kettler explained the department schedules for the Keystone consultant to have township inspections only four days a week.
- Other Communications. Mr. Kettler explained that the software program used to review plans is now a yearly subscription rather than owning the program, and the same is for software such as Adobe which is necessary as the township requires plans to be submitted electronically for quality control.
- Engineering. Mrs. Cozza explained this item is for Knight Engineering to process the engineering for stormwater for the townships MS4 project.
- Salary. Mrs. Cozza said that Mr. Myers, Zoning Officer, is planning to retire March 2025 and township staff are searching for the replacement. Mr. Kettler said he would like to hire someone as soon as possible and have some overlap for educational purposes.
- Code Fees. Mrs. Cozza explained that the building department is not covering the costs this year, and needs to adjust the permit fees accordingly. Mr. Kettler said that Buckingham Township tends to be on the low side of the fees that other townships charge, adding that other townships also charge for items Buckingham does not, such as roofing permits, siding permits, homes for resale, replacing window permits, etc.
Mrs. Cozza said an example of things that should be added are expenses required to process electrical permits, as well as Temporary Certificates of Occupancy. Mr. Kettler said that the fence permit fee doesn't cover the expenses, and Mrs. Cozza pointed out that for swimming pool permits the fence is not broken out and should be a separate permit and fee.
The Board agreed that the fee schedule should be updated in order that the township covers its expenses, but not to add additional permits.
- Vehicle. Mr. Kettler said he is requesting to replace the current vehicle with a F150 pick-up truck, including a light package, as the current vehicle has 100,000 miles. Mr. Kettler said the total should be approximately \$65,000 including upfitting. He said it should be a marked vehicle, that he prefers a lightbar over strobes, and is not particular about the color. Mr. Calderaio suggested the township emblem should be larger than the one on the current vehicle.

Budget – Administration

Mrs. Cozza said that Administration, Finance and Parks and Recreation would be discussed during the next budget meeting, but wanted to bring the following items to the Boards attention.

- Mrs. Cozza said at the recent ICMA convention which she attended, they discussed a program called Civic Plus, which includes a website, right-to-know database and citizen concern software. Mrs. Cozza said she would like to hire an employee to manage these items.
- Mrs. Cozza said that there will be an opening soon for the receptionist position, as the current employee has resigned.
- Newsletters. Mrs. Cozza asked if the Board would like two newsletters budgeted in 2025, and the Board replied “yes”.
- Computer Upgrades / Software. Mrs. Pistory advised this budget item needs to be increased.
- Mrs. Cozza announced that October 18, 2024 the township administration office will be closed to the public for a clean-up day.
- Mrs. Cozza inquired if the township should be closed on November 5th, Election Day, as is usually done when it's a presidential election. The Board said “yes”.

8:50 p.m. The Board retired into Executive Session to discuss personnel matters.

9:15 p.m. The Work Session adjourned.

Approved by the Board of Supervisors on the 23rd day of October, 2024.

Buckingham Township Board of Supervisors

Paul Calderaio, Chairman

Maggie Rash, Vice-Chairman

Jon Forest

Attest:

Dana S. Cozza, Township Secretary

Minutes respectfully submitted by Lori Wicen.