

Westfall Township, Matamoras, PA
October 25, 2022

The Westfall Township Board of Supervisors convened their Budget Meeting on Tuesday, October 25, 2022 at 6:01 pm. The meeting was held at the Township Building on Delaware Drive and LaBarr Lane, Westfall Township.

Those present were Chairman, Jerry Dotey; Vice Chairman, Paul Schaldonat (who arrived at approximately 6:20 p.m.); Supervisors; Paul Fischer; Robert Llewellyn; Davis Twiss; and Secretary, Kaitlin Hildebrandt. Also present were Roadmaster Keith Rodriguez, Westfall Township Fire Department President, William Kofrel; Westfall Township Fire Chief Fred Jacobs; Westfall Township Fire Department 2nd Assistant Chief, Kyle Innella; Treasurer, Scott Myer; Raymond Banach ; Deborah Banach; Rollin Cook; John Dalton. No other members of the general public were present.

The Board received a Second Draft of the 2023 Budget from Mr. Myer for review.

Roadmaster Keith Rodriguez stated that he had three projected road projects in the amount of \$74,000, \$129,00, and \$91,000.00, which will require the budget to be amended again.

Public comment was then heard from Mr. Banach, who questioned if the Township is still paying for the New York State Fire Department to come across the river. Supervisor Fischer stated that he believes that this deal has expired. Mr. Banach then questioned what the line item 405.33 travel reimbursement in the amount of \$11,180.00 is for. Mr. Myer stated that this line item is used for travel for the secretary. He further questioned if the previous Township secretary Jodi was being paid mileage, is this in the handbook, and is this legal with the IRS. He further stated that no travel reimbursement had been approved during his tenure. The Board stated that the secretary travels back and forth for evening meetings, and that they are unsure if there is a policy on this in the handbook. Mr. Banach then stated as a taxpayer he finds \$11,000.00 to be ridiculous and that teachers are not paid mileage. Mrs. Banach then inquired how many meetings are there in a month. The Board stated that it varies by month but there are Supervisor Meetings and Planning Meetings scheduled each month. Mr. Banach then raised questions regarding the position being a four-day work week, with full-time status and health benefits. He stated that the manual had to be amended in order for Jodi to work a four-day week but be considered full-time and receive benefits. Mr. Banach furthered with he did not mean any malice towards the secretary as he does not know her, but this is purely about money. He believes that \$70,000.00 for a secretary is getting out of hand. Mr. Banach questioned as to why it was not advertised as a position with such a large salary and with paid mileage. Had the Township advertised in this manner, they would have received many more applicants for the position, as everyone would like to be paid to travel to work. He further inquired would this set a precedent for other employees, if the Township were to call a driver out for a storm, would they then have to be paid mileage. He closed with the employee manual needs to be followed.

Mr. Myer then addressed the Board that the changes will be made to the budget to reflect the three road projects. This budget has no mills going to Capital Roads, with the previous budget having one mill. The Emergency Management Budget will increase by \$2,400.00 as requested. The total outlay to the Westfall Fire Department is \$155,000.00, with the \$70,000 for the EMT's being netted. Supervisor Twiss inquired about the need for a referendum being need for anything over a ½ a mill. Mr. Myer and Supervisor Llewellyn stated that as the money is coming out of the general fund it will not require a referendum.

Supervisor Fischer inquired if this budget would reduce the mills by one. Mr. Myer states that this keeps the mills flat. The road projects are larger than anticipated but the budget can be tweaked so as there is no increase. The budget being presented this evening will not be the draft going forward. Supervisor Fischer inquired if the budget could be cut by at least a half a mill. Mr. Myer states that with \$294,000.00 going to road projects it would be a struggle to reduce the budget. Vice Chairman Dotey inquired if this would bring all of the Township roads up to

par. Roadmaster Rodriguez stated that he believes these projects will bring the roads up to par and that there should not be any more paving projects that need to be completed in the following year.

Mr. Banach then inquired if the Township roads are on the ten-year plan. Roadmaster Rodriguez stated that he does not like the ten-year plan as some roads deteriorate faster than others due to the base and how the road is constructed. Road projects are selected based upon the condition of the roads and which roads are in disrepair. The Township will be receiving a DCNR grant for the Blue Stone Boulevard slide project in the amount of \$8,500.00.

Mr. Myer stated that the Township will be reducing the general fund mills from 10.35 to 9.65. Realty transfer tax is hard to predict, but Mr. Myer does not anticipate that this will be as big as the last two years.

Vice Chairman Dotey stated that he would have liked to make a cut. Supervisor Schaldonat stated that given the current climate there is a good reason not to lower the budget and that by not lowering it will not put the Township behind going into the following year and causing the Township to raise it further. This could also leave the Township with the possibly of a little extra money to put towards the next year, not knowing what the economy will bring. Mr. Myer stated that one reason not to lower the mills and keep it flat is due to the hiring of EMT's. He furthered that to keep mills flat without an increase is an accomplishment. Mr. Myer questioned if the Board wished to go forward with the road projects in the amount of \$294,000.00. Chairman Dotey stated that he believed it was the best idea to complete these projects in 2023. This will hopefully lead to less road project then in the following years. Supervisor Twiss inquired where the money for the projects would come from, would this lead to a tax increase. Mr. Myer stated that money would be moved around in the budget and that the Township had received COVID money. Supervisor Fischer stated that he believes that it is a good idea to complete the projects next year and then hopefully in the following years the Township will be able to use that money for other matters.

Additional public comment was heard from Mr. Banach regarding any large developing projects that use Township Roads. He believes that the Township should bond and video tape them at the expense of the developer. The Township should speak to PSATS to get sample ordinances to have the developers pay to fix the Township Roads. He states that this is common within the pipeline industry. Roadmaster Rodriguez questioned if anything was done with the Pine Hill Farms Road and bonding when it went through planning. This project was started before his time at the Township. He states that when the developing of that road is complete that road will not be able to handle the traffic as it is only thirteen feet wide and will ultimately need to be redone. Mr. Banach states that they were not required to get a highway occupancy permit from Penn Dot as none of the development touches State roads, and he believes that this should have been required. There are further concerns about school buses being on the road. Mr. Banach furthered that the same thing applies to three-lane and putting the sewage in, that all the lanes on the side of the road are being paid for by the company and not the residents. Roadmaster Rodriguez states that this is something that can be looked into as a second-class Township and an ordinance can be adopted.

Mr. Myer again clarified that the Board would be adding the three road projects to the budget in the amount of \$294,000, that the money will be moved around to accomplish this and that we did not need another budget workshop/meeting. The Board questioned if the tentative budget could be approved at the Supervisors meeting on November 7, 2022. It was determined that Secretary Hildebrandt would check the advertising requirements if any to approve the tentative budget. The Regular Supervisors Meeting for November was confirmed for Monday, November 7th at 7:00 p.m., due to concerns over when election day fell.

Mr. Myer stated that he had one final matter to discuss before the meeting was adjourned, that the Auditors Kirk Summa have provided a copy of the audit, Mr. Myer has reviewed it, and everything is okay, but by law he needs an approval by the Supervisors to release it. A motion was made by Chairman Dotey to approve the audit prepared by Kirk Summa. The motion was seconded by Vice Chairman Schaldonat and carries with all in favor.

Supervisor Fischer inquired if this was an advertised meeting and was the Board permitted to vote. Chairman Dotey informed him that this was an advertised meeting and that the Board could vote. The Board has determined that a flat budget is the best option.

ADJOURNMENT: The Budget Workshop was adjourned at approximately 6:32 p.m. by Chairman Dotey.

Respectfully Submitted,

Kaitlin Hildebrandt
Secretary