



**ON MOTION OF MR. WILLIAM MILLER, SECOND OF MR. BATDORF, A  
UNANIMOUS VOTE TO SIGN THE STORMWATER AGREEMENT AS PRESENTED.**

Ms. Johnston explained that a sanitary sewer agreement for treatment and transportation is currently being worked on between the developer, Cumru Township and the City of Reading. This agreement is expected to come before the Board in the near future.

Mr. Greg Miller asked how close this plan was to development. Ms. Johnston explained that there is a lot to be done before construction can begin. Sewage planning modules need to be sent to the DEP for approval and easements for other properties need to be resolved. An agreement with the water company will also need to be executed. The earliest possible construction would probably be late next year.

**2025 BUDGET**

Ms. Johnston began the budget discussion by explaining significant differences in some of the General Fund revenue. Several revenue sources will decrease. Rent of buildings amounting to approximately \$39,396 will be discontinued in 2026 when the Fire Department moves from the lower level of the administration building into the new Fire Station. Revenue from duplicate bill fees and certification fees has been greatly reduced from the projected budget of \$38,000 to approximately \$7,800 in 2024. The staff only processes the “fee” certification when they used to process the “tax” certifications as well. The Township unexpectedly received continued revenue in 2024 from the landfill but this amount is expected to decrease in 2025. Ms. Johnston explained that the landfill changed the proportion of different types of materials collected and was able to compact it into the available space.

The landfill, while proceeding with closure procedures, would like to suspend its permit until Met-Ed completes moving the power lines. Moving the power lines would give the landfill more vertical space to expand. The landfill also requested placing a recycling center on Township land. The Township questioned why the landfill wouldn't put the recycling center on its own land where the Township yard waste site used to be located. Administration is awaiting a response.

The General Fund budget is being proposed with a 1 mil increase based on 98% collection rate. Mr. William Miller asked Ms. Johnston to explain what 1 mil is worth. She explained that 1 mil based on 98% collection rate by the municipality is worth approximately \$870,000 with the present taxable assessed value.

In order to adopt the 2025 budget and tax ordinance at the Board of Commissioners meeting in December, they must be advertised at least 20 days prior to the meeting. A brief special meeting might be needed if changes are made at the Board of Commissioner meeting on November 19, 2024, and a proposed budget is not authorized for advertisement.

**A.) General Fund – Administration**

There was discussion about some expenses listed in the General Fund – Administration & Code Enforcement.

- 4000-300 is used for commercial permit review fees.
- There was a typo for 2025 for 4030-140. The amount should be \$2000 and this expense will be discontinued in 2026.

- There was a place holder for a proposed building inspector trainee position. The idea is for the trainee to be hired with a proposed increasing wage scale based on completion of certifications. Mr. William Miller asked about the apprentice program that had been presented to the Board earlier this year. Ms. Johnston explained that this position was analogous to that program, but the proposed title is “trainee” because that program has not been instituted yet. The intent of this position is to augment services for residential permits.
- 4040-004 for legal services/codes has been increased due to increased code related issues. The solicitor does have a retainer, but this line item is for charges for out of the ordinary services such as going to court for the properties needing to be demolished,
- 4140-311 consultant line item is being used for the \$63,000 for Delta Development.
- 4140-530 has increased because the ZHB members used to be paid \$25 for the year and this amount was changed to \$25/meeting in 2024.

**B.) General Fund – Parks and Recreation**

Using the Rec Building as the “job trailer” for the Fire Station construction has saved a lot of money. The Contractors are very appreciative. There was a recommendation for 2026 to create a recreation/ open space plan for upgrades to be eligible for grant programs.

**C.) General Fund – Highway**

Several items were discussed under the proposed highway budget.

- 4300-183 overtime wages is difficult to predict because the Township will have to clean the roads no matter what happens. If there are bad storms, this line could be increased.
- 4360-200 storm sewers – the Montrose Blvd. storm sewer project came in under budget.
- 4360-203 is for equipment used for sweeping roads per MS4 requirements.
- 4330-206 long line painting – Mr. McNichols explained that it is more efficient to use a contractor to paint the long lines. The lesser projects like “ONLYS & ARROWS” can be done in-house.
- 4390-313 for construction engineering was decreased because it was not utilized as much as projected.
- 4300-826 and 4300-827 were line items used for the Capital purchases of the backhoe and the boom mower. An interfund loan from the Sewer Fund was used to purchase these items. The Municipal Authority recommended paying off these expenses. Treasurer Mrs. Carpenter requested that the Board consider paying off these line items in 2024.

**ON MOTION OF MR. WILLIAM MILLER, SECOND OF MR. BATDORF, A UNANIMOUS VOTE TO PAY OFF LINE ITEMS 4300-826 AND 4300-827 IN 2024.**

There was discussion of ongoing supply chain/manufacturing issues. Replacement truck #73, which was ordered in 2022, is waiting to be upfitted and is expected to finally be delivered in 2025. This expense has been carried over for 2025.

**D.) Refuse Fund – discuss due date and penalty rates on draft resolution for 2025**

Ms. Johnston wanted to confirm the due date and the penalty rates on draft resolution for 2025. The Board agreed to the wording of the draft resolution as presented.

#### E.) State Liquid Fuels

The Public Works liaisons will decide which road projects should be paved by Township forces in 2025. State Liquid Fuels money and traffic impact fees will be used to pay for the projects.

#### F.) Capital Fund

This fund is used for larger expense items such as vehicles. The Public Works truck #73 replacement ordered in 2022 and replacement of 2 police vehicles are currently listed in this fund. The Township is trying to get a grant for 1 of the vehicles and \$40,000 was received from insurance for the car totaled in an accident.

#### F.) Stormwater Fund

The Stormwater Fund uses collected fees to pay for stormwater inspections and related issues.

There was additional discussion about the proposed budget for 2025.

- Mr. William Miller stated that it was his opinion that taxes would need to be increased to provide the funds needed for the budget.
- Mr. Batdorf agreed citing that the decrease in property assessments were decreasing the tax base.
- Mr. Greg Miller recommended lowering the expense line to \$10.5 million. Mr. William Miller asked what should be cut from the budget.

Mr. Donnell said that there was a misalignment between the expenses and the revenue. He stated that after all the meetings, he had expected to have the budget resolved. Ms. Johnston reminded everyone that the first meeting was devoted to refuse fees and the second meeting discussed the fire fund, so this was the first budget meeting where the remaining General Fund and the overall budget were being discussed. The goal of the budget is to get the EOY balance to at least \$3 million per the bond agreement. This can be done by placing a limit on total expenses or setting a millage increase amount.

Mr. Greg Miller stated that is why he wanted to change the budget process from top to bottom instead of bottom to top. Ms. Johnston respectfully disagreed. The departments never approach the budget process expecting to get everything they want. The 2024 EOY carryover was reduced because large projects were completed to benefit the residents. The \$10.5 million in expenses could be used as a goal, but it will be very difficult to achieve. With potential development coming in the future, revenue should be increased but construction takes time. She cited Hawthorne Ridge apartments, Berks County Waste Transfer Facility, Grings Hill Business Park and Old Hickory Buildings as examples of future development.

Mr. Batdorf asked about the number of reassessments. Ms. Johnston told him that it mostly involved single-family homes.

Chief Winchester said that contractual obligations account for a large percentage of the budget. He informed the Board that through succession planning, the Police Department will be able to maintain the same level of service without replacement when 2 officers retire in the near future.

Mr. William Miller voiced concern that big cuts in the budget could mean big cuts in services. Mr. Batdorf agreed by saying that it will be very visible to the people when services are cut. Mr. Greg Miller countered with it will be visible when the taxes are raised by 26%.

Mr. Greg Miller asked Ms. Johnston to rework the numbers to give options. Ms. Johnston agreed that the goal would be to come up with a list of options for the Board to decide where the EOY balance would be \$3 million for the bond documents and to cover the expenses for the first quarter of 2025.

## PUBLIC

Attendance: Ruth O'Leary and Ellen Condon.

Mrs. O'Leary addressed the Board with her concerns. She stated that approximately 64.5% of the budget is the Police Department. The Board can try to save here and there but the Police Department will be affected. She gave an example that decreasing the Police budget by approximately \$542,000 would mean cutting 4 officers. She recommended cutting the extra speed board and related expenses out of the budget. She expressed her opinion that the Board should not have authorized the \$63,000 expense for the development group.

## CORRESPONDENCE

A.) Meeting advertised for budget and other business in the Reading Eagle on 10/10/2024

## REMINDERS

A.) Board of Commissioners meetings for November and December 2024

11/19/2024 at 7:00 p.m. – Regular Meeting

12/17/2024 at 7:00 p.m. – Regular Meeting

B.) Zoning Hearing Board 11/26/2024 at 6:00 p.m.

Application No. 825 – Continuance-seeking variance in order to purchase 2.035 acres gross from Wyomissing United Church of Christ located at 2 Vermont Rd. This would leave the church with 2.132 acres.

Application No. 827 – Seeking special exception to add modular home on the property known as 812 Cameron St.

Application No. 828 – Seeking variance in order to place a 280-ft. shed in the front yard of the property known as 504 Summit Ave.

Application No. 829 – Seeking variance in order to construct a single-family residence. There is an existing garage on the property known as 1601A Ridge Ave.

Application No. 830 – Seeking variance in order to place a detached garage in the front yard on an existing driveway on the property known as 529 Pershing Blvd.

C.) Planning Commission 12/02/2024 at 6:00 p.m.

D.) Zoning and SALDO Amendment Hearings rescheduled to 1/21/2025

ADJOURNMENT  
ON MOTION OF MR. BATDORF, SECOND OF MR. GREG MILLER, A UNANIMOUS  
VOTE TO ADJOURN THE MEETING AT 8:09 P.M.

Respectfully submitted,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Jeanne E. Johnston". The signature is written in a cursive style with a large, stylized initial "J".

Jeanne E. Johnston  
Manager/Secretary