

**PALMER TOWNSHIP BOARD OF SUPERVISORS**  
**SEPTEMBER 8, 2011**  
**SPECIAL BUSINESS MEETING**

The Palmer Township Board of Supervisors held a special business meeting at 9 a.m. on September 8, 2011 in the municipal building conference room. The following Board members were in attendance: Dave Colver, Robert Lammi, Robert Smith, and Ann-Marie Panella. Mike Mitchell was absent but may be arriving late. Christopher Christman, Scott Kistler, Tom Adams, Tom Trinchere, Bruce Fretz, Doreen Umholtz, Delmar Grube, Dan McKinney, Paul Hosking, Sheri Young and Brenda DeGerolamo were also in attendance. Chairman Colver convened the meeting and led those present in the Pledge to the Flag.

2. BUDGET DISCUSSIONS WITH DEPARTMENT HEADS

GENERAL FUND

Colver said this is the third year we are holding this meeting before the budget process begins. Colver said the Board is looking for updates from each department head of anything big you may be aware of coming down the road. Colver said this still allows us time to make adjustments as we begin the 2012 budget process.

Township Manager, Christopher Christman said the real estate transfer tax is coming in at 50% in August and we should be at 66% at this time. Christman said earned income tax is on target so it appears that our residents are employed. The Business Privilege Tax is over performing and the Local Services Tax is right on target. Christman said licenses and permits are underperforming which is an indication of our current economy. Christman said overall it appears we are performing on target.

Sheri Young said the Business Privilege Tax should come in at \$1 million plus for the end of this year. Young said Nancy Mendres is currently collecting the tax and going after the delinquencies, so I think we should be over budget. Young said on the expense side there are refunds that had to be made. If you take that into consideration we are right around what we budgeted at \$900,000. Young said the Real Estate Transfer tax is going to be short about \$100,000.

Doreen Umholtz said real estate taxes are on target. Umholtz said with the reassessment of the Highlands of Glenmoor it has brought down our assessed value. Umholtz said the Local Services tax is on target.

Cynthia Carman said the zoning permit number is down due to Mandy Partners not coming through this year as anticipated.

Lammi asked why the cable TV line item increased. Young said we budget the prior year amount, but every year it increases due to new hookups.

Tom Adams said maintenance and repairs under building and grounds could go over this year. Colver asked if there was a cost estimate to add electric at the community center pavilion and also for the Riverview Park pavilion. Adams said three or four years ago we went out for estimates for Riverview Park and it was about \$10,000. Adams said it was held back due to

economics. Colver asked to revisit the electric at the Riverview Pavilion in the 2012 budget. Lammi asked about the salary line item being over budget. Adams said public works has seven or eight different areas where we budget salaries. We may be over on one line item but then we are under in another.

Chief Fretz said we are over budget on the capital purchase line item. Fretz said we anticipated using some old equipment from existing vehicles for the new ones we purchased but they did not fit the new vehicles. Fretz said the gas line item is going to be close this year and we anticipate an increase next year; as well as, an increase in the tire line item. Fretz said there are also variables with the outstanding arbitration. We won't know where we stand with that until we hear back from the arbitrator. Christman said he thinks the Junior Cadet Academy is a great program and he would suggest bumping that line item up from \$1,000 to \$1,500. The Board agreed to increase that line item. Colver asked if they plan to replace the K9 officer. Fretz said we will include a replacement in next year's budget. Colver said he would like the police to look at adding GPS to the vehicles. Colver said after the incident we had on Route 22 a few years ago, GPS would have been beneficial. Fretz said there is a GPS feature that could be added on our Verizon air cards for the laptops. Fretz said they have someone from Verizon coming in next week and they will look into that option. Christman asked if the air cards are managed through the "Verizon My Business" package. Fretz said it was. Colver asked if they would be adding vehicles in 2012. Fretz said three Crown Victoria's. Christman asked what the department plans to do after they stop manufacturing the Crown Vics. Fretz said departments that used Dodge's are getting away from them because they are too small. Scott Kistler asked where we stand with radio communications. Fretz said Lieutenant DeMarco has been in contact with two-way, and the repeater is about \$40,000. Fretz said if we switch over to UHF it would cost about \$70,000. Fretz said the benefit is we could talk to fire and other road departments; it would benefit us to go with the \$70,000. Supervisor Smith said to go with the \$40,000 is just a band aid. Kistler said when we have storm situations – we really can't do without it. Christmas asked if Northampton County is going to assist with any system upgrade. Fretz said there were discussions in the past but at this point – no.

Delmar Grube said no fire trucks are in the forecast and spending is under control. Christman said we are way over under general repairs/buildings and grounds. Grube said that is because we received a \$10,000 grant that came into our revenue line item and was paid out of this line item. Grube said he doesn't see any large expenditure for 2012. Smith asked how the budget is impacted when we have a significant event like the fire in the north end this year. Grube said services were submitted to the insurance company and should be reimbursed by them.

Cyndie Carman said there are still outstanding issues with developer escrow line items. Carman said when we don't have money to pay a bill with the developer's account we pay it from this line item and it gets refunded into the developer escrow revenue line item. Carman said we continue to have a few developers that are delinquent. Colver said those developers now know that if they don't have money in their escrow account the project stops.

Panella asked if the donation line item for CACLV is going to Safe Harbor. Lammi said our money should go directly to Safe Harbor. Lammi said he believes we should go to our local one, not to the one in the Lehigh Valley. Lammi said the Jennings group had to make cuts and now Safe Harbor is really hurting. Colver said we also used to give some money to the Bushkill Stream Conservancy. Carman said \$3,000 is scheduled to go to CACLV and \$1,000 to the

Bushkill Stream Conservancy. Colver said if we have the skate park come up and if communities end up donating to the Miracle League these numbers should be included in here too. Adams said some of those donations may apply to recreation, not general donations.

Lammi questioned the recycling center numbers. Lammi said we see a lot of people using the center but the numbers don't reflect it as far as tonnage.

Kistler said overall public works will be \$28,000 under budget this year. Kistler said the purchase of a small dump truck will be budgeted for 2012. Kistler said he doesn't anticipate any big changes in this account for 2012. Kistler said prices are stable for salt. Kistler said last year we had a shortage of salt and we had to go out of the state contract to make a purchase. That purchase we couldn't charge to the liquid fuels account. Kistler said he again reserved 600 tons of salt with another vendor for this season. If we run into a problem with the current state vendor we can jump off the contract and still be able to get salt.

Adams said we may see a dip in street lighting with the new vapor bulbs that have been installed.

Christman suggested adding a community events line item to the general recreation area of the budget at \$10,000. Colver said there are things spread out in different line items of the budget for these events and it will be easier to track if we move them all into one line item. Smith said the Athletic Association paid \$22,000 for the football helmets this year. Smith said we aren't sure if legion baseball will stay in Palmer and that is a huge chunk of our budgeted amount. Smith said a new line item will be needed for field hockey.

Kistler said under parks and playground the seed and fertilizer line item is going to go over. Kistler said there were repairs needed after community weekend. Kistler said the capital equipment new truck purchase number was off. Kistler said he anticipates next years budget to remain where it is this year and he anticipates being under budget by \$4,000 this year.

Christman said the 10,000 in the operating reserve was where we ran a little short for community weekend.

Colver said there will be changes coming on the benefit end of things for employees. Colver said we are not looking to make employees contribute toward their benefits at this time, but we can receive significant cost savings by increasing co-pays for office visits and prescription drugs.

#### POOL FUND

Adams said we are waiting for grant approval for the pool handicapped accessibility repairs. They won't be done this year. McKinney said we have to hold the line on prices for 2012 to remain competitive. Season ticket sales were down and the gate admissions were up. McKinney said we spent more than we took in only by about \$5,000 but it's not where we want to be. Christman said the Chemtrol Unit was struck by lightening two times last month and it was submitted through insurance. Christman said we need to make sure there is no electrical issue there. McKinney said at some point the pool is going to demand our attention and DCNR grants are no guarantee. McKinney said the issues aren't getting any better. Adams said the coping and bond around the pool is not getting better. Adams aid the DCNR grant is a match

grant and \$240,000 is available from Northampton County that isn't a matchable grant – but even that won't go very far. Adams said the consultant suggested a stainless steel gutter around the pool and that would reduce costs. McKinney said we should have a contingency plan in place in case the DCNR grant doesn't happen.

#### PARK AND RECREATION FUND

Adams said the state grant line item has \$200,000 for the DCNR grant for the bike path and \$120,000 from Northampton County. Adams said the final documents have been submitted to DCNR and we are waiting to hear back from them so we can go out for bids. Adams said paving should take place in the spring for the last mile of the bike path.

Carman said the income (building permits) line item is going to be way off because we anticipated Mandy Partners coming through this year and that would have been \$420,000. Carman said she is projecting \$120,000 for 2011. Christman said he would suggest renaming this line item.

#### COMMUNITY CENTER

McKinney said the numbers show we are \$40,000 to the positive, but we also owe the Athletic Association about \$30,000; so we are about \$10,000 to the good. McKinney said he doesn't anticipate we will need the whole \$42,000 that was budgeted to be transferred from the general fund, but possibly \$10,000. McKinney said summer camp went well. We ran the program for ten weeks instead of 12 which was budgeted, and we still came in with a surplus of \$50,000.

#### SEWER FUND

Hosking said he doesn't anticipate anything big coming up. Hosking said they had an interceptor repair that should be reimbursed from federal funds. Hosking said overall the numbers are looking good and next year we don't anticipate any large capital items. Colver said we know the rate study information is on its way. Christman said it could be put on the Boards meeting agenda for the end of this month. Christman said years ago the rates were cut 20% and with the increase in 2005 we are still behind the rate we were charging 15 years ago. Christman said if we would incur a catastrophic repair there may not be enough in the reserve to cover it.

Colver said this meeting gives us a good snap shot view of where we are and what is going on. Smith said it may be beneficial for the police department to consider buying two years worth of Crown Victoria's since they will no longer be manufacturing them. Smith said if you purchase that amount you may be able to get a vehicle for free for purchasing in bulk.

Christman said he talked to Tom Adams and Scott Kistler about possibly starting a road equipment fund that would be dedicated strictly to road equipment capital purchases. Christman said he hasn't run the actual numbers to see if there is money to pull a certain percentage of millage that could go into this fund. Christman said we could also possibly establish a capital projects fund that would have an annual transfer from the general fund. Christman asked the Board if they would be interested in allocating a percentage of millage rates to a road equipment fund. Colver said he needs to think about that a little bit. Colver said right now we have the leeway to shuffle money. Colver said from a planning perspective you can identify when the big

trucks are going to hit. Lammi said a year to year plan for capital purchases would be a help too. It's hard to track in our current budget. Christman said if we leave our current millage alone, we would remove a half mill toward the road equipment fund. You would be reducing the available money in your general fund by half a mill.

3. NOVUSAGENDA PRESENTATION

The Board of Supervisors reviewed an online webinar presentation of the NovusAGENDA software offered by General Code Publishers.

Christman reviewed the cost savings to the township should we elect to purchase the new electronic agenda system. The total annual savings is estimated to be around \$38,858. The system would be hosted off site at NovusAGENDA and the township would incur a \$350 per month charge. Christman also noted he would propose purchasing iPads for each Board member where they would be able to manage the NovusAGENDA system. Each Board member would also have a township issued email address so all their township related business could be handled directly through the iPad and removed from their home personal computers.

After the presentation the Board authorized the Township Manager to begin the process to purchase the NovusAGENDA software and iPads.

The meeting was adjourned at 11:30 a.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Christopher S. Christman  
Township Manager