

The stated Proposed 2021 Budget Meeting of the Board of Commissioners of the Township of Abington was held as a Zoom webinar and teleconference on Thursday, November 12, 2020 with President Spiegelman presiding.

CALL TO ORDER: 6:00 p.m.

ROLL CALL: Present: Commissioners THOMPSON, BRODSKY, BOLE, CARSWELL, ROTHMAN, VAUGHN, MYERS, ZAPPONE, BOWMAN, DiPLACIDO, WINEGRAD, VAHEY, SCHREIBER, HECKER, SPIEGELMAN

Also Present: Township Manager MANFREDI
Finance Director HERMANN

PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE

Item BOC-01-121020 – Proposed FY 2021 Budget:

Manager Manfredi said preliminary proposed budget was presented to the Board of Commissioners on October 22, 2020 and all information pertaining to it has been posted on Township’s website. Budget schedule was presented, and the Board may consider adopting proposed budget for fiscal year 2021 this evening and then the public comment period will begin on Monday, November 16th, available for 20 days. A special meeting will be held on December 10, 2020 for the Board of Commissioners to consider adopting the FY 2021 annual budget and tax levy ordinance. This budget does not increase real estate taxes and holds business privilege, mercantile and earned income taxes at the same level as FY 2020. Also, this budget reduces general fund expenditures for FY 2021 below budgeted expenditures from FY 2020 as result of cutting costs including furloughs.

It is imperative to immediately begin planning for the future to manage loss due to the pandemic and there is no question that the \$5.3 million loss identified will be challenging going forward, and although this budget includes no tax increase, we will need to focus on all aspects of revenues going forward, which will begin early next year. Strategic planning process for FY 2022 will begin in March 2021 and steps will be taken to stay on schedule.

General purpose tax levy is 4.851, which is the same as FY 2020, so a property owner will pay \$1.00 in property tax for every \$1,000 of the taxable appraised value of the property. If Montgomery County assessed value for an Abington Township homeowner’s property were set at \$150,000, then one mill of taxes would equal \$150.00. At the proposed Township tax rate of 4.851, the average Township taxpayer will pay \$727.65 in property taxes, an increase of \$0 from 2020.

Total general fund revenues are \$44,471,763 and expenses are the same amount. The general fund is balanced at \$39,114,228 with a \$5,357,475 fund balance appropriation for a total of \$44,471,763 resulting in a net fund balance surplus of \$6,188,515 for FY 2022 in the general fund. In that total tax bill, 78.5% goes to the School District, 8.5% goes to Montgomery County, 1% goes to the Community College and 12% to the Township.

President Spiegelman made a MOTION, seconded by Vice President Hecker to approve the Fiscal Year 2021 Proposed Annual Budget, and authorize advertisement of the budget and Tax Ordinance.

President Spiegelman asked for any comments from Commissioners.

Commissioner Bole asked Manager Manfredi to further explain how efficiency within the budget was addressed while still maintaining high level of service for residents of the Township.

Manager Manfredi replied the fund balance policy implemented back in 2014 was wise and the difficult decision was made last year to raise taxes that put additional revenues into the budget. All Township staff has the mindset to look for ways in how to operate more efficiently including cost effectiveness in how the Township does business every day, and not just this year during the pandemic, but in the past, while maintaining high level of service. Staff are mindful about whether a decision they make is in the best interest of the Township and the people they serve, and he is proud of them.

Commissioner Thompson asked about the CARES Act that is available for municipalities and what the outlook is for the Township.

Manager Manfredi replied he will reach out to Montgomery County to find out what the Township is eligible for through the Federal government's CARES Act for COVID-related expenses.

Vice President Hecker commented that he appreciates all the hard work, energy and effort that went into this budget process. There will be challenging days ahead and the Board may be having a different discussion next year; however, he looks forward to working with everyone.

President Spiegelman asked for any public comments.

Lora Lehmann, resident, expressed concern about not being able to find out salary/position information.

Manager Manfredi clarified that he answered the resident's questions regarding salary and positions. The updated job descriptions of positions including salary and/or wages are listed in the Table of Contents of the budget documents for purpose of transparency.

MOTION was ADOPTED 15-0.

ADJOURNMENT: 6:38 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Liz Vile, Minutes Secretary