

**BOARD OF COMMISSIONERS
BUDGET HEARING
OCTOBER 23, 2025**

MEMBERS PRESENT

John J. Merhottein, President
John K. Gallagher, Vice President
Matthew Deckman, Commissioner
Michael Hudak, Commissioner
DeAnn Lawrence, Commissioner

OTHERS PRESENT

Doug Bruce, Township Manager
Andrew Freda, Finance Director
Felix Martinez, Jr., Assistant Finance Director
Jackie Bittel, Community Center Director
Gregory Gottschall, Police Chief
Shawn Powell, Police Captain
Richard Kanaskie, Public Works Director
Justin Weis, Public Works Assistant Director

**OPENING
STATEMENTS**

Mr. Bruce called the meeting to order at 6:00 p.m. and welcomed everyone to the first of three budget hearings. The next two budget hearings will be held on October 28, 2025, and November 6, 2025, at 6:00 pm. The budget will be presented to the Board of Commissioners at the November 17th meeting and will be available to the public for inspection for 30 days. The board will vote to adopt the budget at the December 17th meeting.

Mr. Bruce gave a brief overview of the budget noting that the funds were balanced with the exception of Liquid Fuels and the Fire Tax Fund. No real estate tax or sewer rate increase was proposed.

Mr. Gallagher asked for an exact number for the annual wage increases. Mr. Freda said he would have that available to him.

**COMMUNITY
CENTER**

Ms. Bittel said there were no significant increases to her budget. She said staff had added more programming which requires more staffing. There were minor increases to the external fees. Mr. Bruce said the utilities budget was moved to the PPIS budget. It wasn't a new expense: it was moved to a different place. Mr. Bruce said the revenue portion of this budget shows significant increases, up to \$1.2 million overall this year – nearly the same number as before the pandemic. Ms. Bittel said they are projecting \$1.3 million in revenue for 2026 as memberships have increased. Mr. Deckman said that's awesome. Mr. Gallagher asked if they could come up with programs that would generate income. Ms. Bittel said she would explore that.

Ms. Bittel said \$50,000 was budgeted in capital to replace the outdoor pool water feature. She believes the final project will come under budget. Mr. Gallagher said that it is money well spent. Mr. Bruce agreed. The board thanked Ms. Bittel for a job well done.

POLICE

Chief Gottschall presented the police budget and noted the salary increases per contract and no significant changes in contractual services. Mr. Deckman asked if noted a change in shift differential. Captain Powell said that was based on actual year-to-date figures. Mr. Bruce said that as of September, 2025, the department's budget was at 90 percent for shift differential.

Mr. Merhottein asked if all the officers had body cameras. Captain Powell said yes. Mr. Hudak asked about the canine officer. Captain Powell said Officer Tollinger's dog passed away unexpectedly and it wouldn't make sense for him to train another dog since he will be retiring in the very near future. Mr. Hudak said he considers a canine officer valuable. Chief Gottschall said he would look into the program next year. Mr. Bruce said 40 officers are currently on the roster. Mr. Deckman asked about the minor equipment purchase of laser rifle sights. Chief Gottschall said the sight has a more accurate aiming system and hopes to transition all the rifles to the sight next year.

Mr. Bruce said four vehicles were added to the budget: three standard police vehicle and one for investigators. Chief Gottschall said mobile license plate readers were budgeted to replace the old ones which are about 15 years old. Mr. Hudak asked if all patrol vehicles have them. Captain Gottschall said only a small number of police vehicles have them. Captain Powell said the new ones have real time alert with a picture of a car and the license plate. Chief Gottschall thanked the board and staff for the continue support.

BARRY ROTH

4323 CHETWIN TERR.

Mr. Roth asked that the DARE Program be put back in the budget.

PUBLIC WORKS

Mr. Kanaskie said there were no major changes in his department's budget from last year. Mr. Bruce said the board last year approved two new entry-level position, which have not yet been filled. He said they have had difficulty in hiring at the CDL level and plan on hiring two laborers with the intent of securing their CDL.

Mr. Bruce said the annual state allocation to the liquid fuels fund has dropped since the pandemic. This is a state gas tax. As a result of declining state revenues, the liquid fuels fund is no longer balancing, Mr. Bruce said. Road paving, street light costs, and lease-purchase of dump trucks come out of this account. Mr. Deckman asked what a large dump truck cost. Mr. Kanaskie said they start at \$300,000 and there are no grants available to cover the cost. The department keeps trucks as long as parts are available; some vehicles are kept for more than 20 years.

Mr. Bruce said staff recommends paving Reeves Drive and Windswept Drive for \$600,000 as the annual paving project. Mr. Kanaskie said the estimated cost to repave the Kingsview area, recently the subject of a residents' petition, was \$500,000. He said it is the pleasure of the board to switch the projects around. Mr. Deckman asked how many miles of road does the township maintain. Mr. Kanaskie said there are over 123 miles of road. Mr. Merhottein asked if the paving could be done in-house. Mr. Kanaskie said they don't have the manpower nor the equipment to accomplish this.

Mr. Bruce said the safety committee made a recommendation to budget \$10,000 for the purchase of a commercial grade ice machine for employees from the PPIS, Public Works, and Police department. The ice machine would be placed at the public works facility.

ADJOURNMENT

Mr. Bruce said the next budget hearing is Tuesday, October 28, 2025 from 6:00 p.m. to 8:00 p.m.

The meeting concluded at 7:32 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

10-23-2025

Laura G. Zapata
Recording Secretary