

**CUMRU TOWNSHIP BOARD OF COMMISSIONERS
SPECIAL MEETING**

OCTOBER 19, 2023

The Special Meeting of the Cumru Township Board of Commissioners was called to order by President Ruth A. O'Leary at 3:30 p.m. Other Commissioners in attendance were Vice President David J. Batdorf, William B. Miller and Lisha Rowe. Also attending were Solicitor Kelsey Frankowski, Chief of Police Madison Winchester, Fire Chief James Beane, Superintendent of Public Works Robert McNichols, Jr., Asst. Superintendent of Public Works Michael Yost, Jr., Manager/Secretary Jeanne E. Johnston, Business/Personnel Administrator Peggy A. Carpenter, and Special Projects/Asst. Secretary Patricia A. Wylezik-Pfeiffer. Commissioner Sam Kalbach was excused.

NOTICE:

Public comment will be accepted in person. Please include your first name, last name and address for all comments. Any comments without a name or address will not be considered. To accommodate as many people as possible, we request that each person's comments be limited to 3 minutes. The meeting comment period is limited to a total of 60 minutes. This time period may be extended at the discretion of the Commissioners. While public comments will be given due consideration, immediate responses will be done at the discretion of the Commissioners.

Pledge to the Flag.

PUBLIC

No one from the public attended.

ON MOTION OF MR. MILLER, SECOND OF MS. ROWE, A UNANIMOUS VOTE TO AMEND THE AGENDA TO CORRECTLY REFLECT THAT THE 2024 BUDGET INSTEAD OF THE 2023 BUDGET WILL BE DISCUSSED.

2024 BUDGET

A.) Sewer Funds

1) sewer fund 803

- a) Letter from City of Reading re: treatment and transportation rate for 2024-2025 – overall increase of 12.5%, dated 09/29/2023

Ms. Johnston explained the sewer rates. She informed the Board that the City of Reading increase will go into effect August of 2024. Point of connection (POC) #8 and #10, which are approximately 1/3 of Cumru Township's sewer system, do not use the City's transportation rate.

2) sewer capital fund 809

Mr. McNichols presented a list of sewer capital projects, including replacement of the sewer mains under Cedar Top Rd., which would entail reconstruction of the rest of the road. Several other capital projects have been identified, including sewer mains in Ardmore Ave. and a section of Flying Hills Dr. and an upgrade to the SCADA system. Ms. Johnston recommended that the Board wait until after the second quarter payment in 2024 to consider raising the sewer rate, depending on the remaining fund balance. Raising the rate will be necessary to compensate for

the increased treatment charges by the City of Reading and to transfer additional revenue to the sewer capital fund for the identified capital projects.

Hiring expenses were increased for 2024 in order to replace the 2 open sewer positions. Due to the change in CDL training regulations, there was discussion about the possibility of hiring people without CDL certification and training them during a probationary period. This would require a change to the Teamsters collective bargaining agreement.

B.) SMP (Sewer Management Program for on lot systems) Fund

Ms. Johnston explained that Cumru Township has approx. 1035 on-lot systems that are divided into 3 districts. The DEP wants the on-lot systems to be pumped and inspected every 3 years. The SMP program currently has a fee of \$65.00 annually.

There was a fund surplus, originally intended to subsidize a revision to the Act 537 Sewage Facilities Plan. The Township made progress on a revision a few years ago, but the DEP asked the Township to withdraw the plan. The DEP reviewer at the time desired the Township to extend sanitary sewer all the way down SR 625. That reviewer retired during the COVID pandemic and the DEP has not encouraged a revision to the plan since that time. There was discussion about lowering the fee because of the unencumbered fund balance. Ms. Johnston stated that the DEP could require an Act 537 revision in future years.

There was discussion of why the DEP requires a Sewage Enforcement Officer (SEO) to provide the inspections. The SEO changed in 2023 because the prior SEO left the profession. The Township has taken on more administrative time and postage costs associated under operations with the new SEO; some of the line items were increased to account for those changes.

C.) EMS Tax (Ambulance) Fund 090

1) proposed contract with TowerDirect as follows:

- \$35/household for 2024
- \$45/household for 2025
- \$45/household for 2026

2) estimated households 6,864 (includes apartments)

Ms. Johnston recommended that the EMS tax would not have to be raised this year from the current 0.27 tax rate due to carry over funds.

D.) Debt Service Fund 400

1) 2020 bond debt service schedule

Ms. Johnston recommended keeping the Debt Service at the current 0.85 tax rate. Since this fund has little to no carryover, this millage must be examined closely each year.

E.) State Liquid Fuels Fund 350

1) Letter from PennDOT re: estimated Act 655 allocation for 2024 of \$490,075.69 and \$15,760 for turnback, dated 09/2023

This topic was not discussed.

F.) General Fund 010

1) buildings and grounds department

The wage line item was increased by 5%, pending Teamsters contract negotiations. Allocations were proposed for the fob system upgrade, replacement of the fire alarm system, and efficiency/safety upgrades in 1786 Welsh Rd., the police evidence building and former office. The building was constructed in the 1950s. Before the HVAC system can be addressed, the electrical wiring must be addressed for fire safety purposes. There was a recommendation to increase the engineering services to \$8,000 because of this project.

CORRESPONDENCE

A.) Meeting advertised in the Reading Eagle 10/17/2024

COMMISSIONERS

A.) Vacancies

1) Sewer Authority – 2 vacancies

2) Recommendation from the Chairman to consider appointment of commissioner(s)

There was discussion about appointing Mr. Miller and Mr. Kalbach to fill the vacancies on the Municipal Authority. It was recommended that this item be placed on the agenda for the next Board of Commissioner meeting.

B.) Reminders:

1) Board of Commissioners meetings for October 2023

- 10/26/2023 at 3:30 p.m. – Budget Meeting

- 10/31/2023 at 7:00 p.m. – 5th Tuesday Meeting

ADJOURNMENT

ON MOTION OF MR. MILLER, SECOND OF MR. BATDORF, A UNANIMOUS VOTE TO ADJOURN THE MEETING AT 5:20 P.M.

Respectfully submitted,



Jeanne E. Johnston
Manager/Secretary