

**Record of Proceedings:
West Chester Township Board of Trustees
Work Session - 2021 Operational Budget**

January 19, 2021

Convene: Chairperson Wong convened the meeting at 5:02 p.m.

Roll Call: Mr. Wong, Mr. Welch, and Mrs. Becker.

Pledge of Allegiance: repeated by those present.

(FISCAL OFFICER'S NOTE: Much of the following have been excerpted from a prepared outline compiled for the 2021 Operational Budget Work Session. A PowerPoint slide program supplemented the narrative and is available upon request.)

Mr. Wong turned the work session over to Mr. Burks.

Township Administrator Larry Burks:

Mr. Burks said he was pleased to present the 2021 Operational Budget, noting the following: Proposed operational budget expenditures for 2021 are \$48.1 million, a 5% decrease from 2020. The operational budget encompasses 10 primary funds and accounts for strategic infrastructure improvements/replacements, public safety, operational expenses and personnel costs. Tonight, we'll focus on the General Fund, the Police Fund, the Fire & EMS Funds and the Roads and Maintenance Funds.

Mr. Burks then introduced Finance Director Ken Keim to deliver the 2021 Operational Budget in more detail.

Finance Director Ken Keim:

The Board of Trustees does not formally approve the operational budget as presented. Individual expenditures greater than \$7,500 come before the Board for approval throughout the year; and there is accountability for remaining within the constraints established by the operational budget. The Permanent Appropriations Resolution brought before the Board is the "official" budget document required of Townships by Ohio Revised Code. Appropriations resolutions, however, are less specific and only reflect resources available by fund.

The operational budget accounts for 10 funds: General Fund, four separate Roads Funds, Cemetery Fund, Integrated Multi-Media Fund, Police Fund, and Fire and EMS Funds. The General Fund includes activities from Administration, Human Resources, Community Development, Community Services, Finance, Parks, Information Technology, Senior Van and General Street Lighting. Tax Increment Finance Districts, not represented as part of the operational budget, play a critical role in large Township projects. TIF revenue is generated from commercial development in specific districts and accounts for \$8.4MM of the Township's Capital Improvement Projects in 2021.

Carryover is a topic throughout the presentation. Carryover is the cash balance remaining after expenditures.

West Chester will enter 2021 with carryovers in each of its primary funds: General Fund - \$9.9 million; Roads Funds - \$2.9 million; Police Fund - \$12.9 million; Fire & EMS Funds - \$13.4 million.

Revenue projections for all primary funds in 2021 are approximately \$46.8 million in total. West Chester remains conservative in revenue projections with actual revenue received greater than projected in each of the past 12 years.

Approximately 22% of each typical West Chester taxpayer dollar goes toward Township services including police and fire. Property tax projections for 2021 represent \$37.4 million or 82.9% of the Township's revenue in the primary funds that we're discussing tonight. It's 59.0% across all funds. The Butler County Auditor abstract, while under dispute, demonstrates a 14.5% increase in West Chester property values this year, based on a required re-valuation of property that occurs every six years. Last year, West Chester narrowly exceeded its 2009 previous peak assessed valuation. \$2.4 billion now the value being assessed.

Mr. Keim then addressed the General Fund, saying actual revenues in the General Fund were less than budgeted in 2020 due to not selling the Cox Road building as planned and the impact of COVID on hotel tax collections. For 2021, we're projecting revenue to this fund of \$5.3 million. While an increase in property tax revenue is expected, we remain skeptical in projections from all other revenue sources to the General Fund. Budgeted expenditures in the General Fund are nearly \$8.1 million. We also show an available balance of \$15.2 million.

Mr. Keim then identified some of the 2021 General Fund highlights:

\$250,000 – State Route 42 Corridor Revitalization – This is a budgeted expense appearing over multiple years. The intention is to have funding already identified should an opportunity arise.

\$250,000 – Document Archiving – This is a large project involving the scanning of critical documents and improving access to all Township documents. The project is identified to improve efficiency and reduce paper.

\$75,000 – Feasibility Study for Library Expansion – As part of a strategic plan initiative to inventory and consider public space needs in the community, this funding is intended to determine the feasibility and potential costs associated with expanding the library

\$57,500 – Keehner Park Improvements – Every year it seems we budget and plan for improvements to this great community amenity. Budget in 2021 is identified for preservation of the log cabin at the park, updates to the electrical and backstage area of the amphitheater, replacement of the concrete in several shelters and a new sewer line connection.

Mr. Keim then responded to questions from the three Trustees.

Mr. Keim then gave an introduction into the Roads and Maintenance Funds:

The Roads and Maintenance Funds category encompasses four funds which collect revenue from a variety of sources including property taxes, the gasoline tax, the motor vehicle license tax and a \$1.5 million transfer from the General Fund. More than \$4.6 million in revenue is projected into these funds in 2021, which includes the \$1.5 million transfer from the General Fund. We are projecting about \$791,000 from the gasoline tax, less than received in 2020 (\$825,762) but more than what has been traditionally collected from this source. In 2018, the state increased 10.5 cents per gallon, which equates to approximately \$400,000 of the total we receive. Budgeted expenses in these funds is \$5.6 million – about \$1 million less than budgeted in 2020 due to installation of decorative fencing on the Tylersville Road bridge. The amount available in these funds will total nearly \$7.5 million.

Mr. Keim then invited Services Director Tim Franck to offer more specifics about the 2021 plan for roads.

Services Director Tim Franck:

This Board of Trustees and those before have demonstrated a commitment to infrastructure by supplementing the Roads Funds each year with a \$1.5 million transfer from the General Fund and by creating a Sustainable Infrastructure Fund with a current balance of about \$10 million. While county roads within TIF areas are improved using TIF resources, the BCEO funds pavement of some Township roads and contributes equipment, personnel, and other resources to improve Township infrastructure.

The partnership with the BCEO saved West Chester taxpayers approximately \$4 million over the past nine years; and an additional \$300,000 in savings is expected in 2021. This partnership affects work on culverts and ditching, striping of Township roads, as well as approximately \$200,000 in paving on Township roads in 2021.

Most notable in the 2021 budget proposal for Roads is \$3.3 million investment in the annual infrastructure improvement program. This accounts for road, curb, and storm pipe replacement in the Roads Funds and qualifying improvements in the TIF areas.

The 2021 roadway Infrastructure program includes:

- \$700,000 for approximately 14,000 lineal feet of concrete curb replacement.
- Approximately 5.5 miles of road will be repaved at a budgeted cost of \$1.7 million = \$700,000 in Roads Funds and \$1 million in TIF.
- And 70 sections of storm pipe will be repaired throughout the Township at a budgeted expense of \$700,000. In 2020, we originally planned to repair 40 sections of storm pipe. Throughout the year, an additional 12 storm pipes were repaired along with numerous catch basins. As discussed the last several years, the number of storm pipes requiring repairs continues to increase each year and a greater funding commitment for these repairs will be necessary. The current \$700,000 is \$200,000 more than we budgeted in 2020, and is anticipated to continue to increase in order to meet the demands.

Other notable budgeted expenses in Community Services include:

- \$200,000 for purchase of road salt for the 2021-2022 snow season, this is in addition to the money already budgeted and encumbered in 2020 for the current snow season (about \$100,000).

We are also scheduled to replace 3 vehicles in 2021:

- \$60,000 has been budgeted for the purchase of a new 1 ton dump truck
- And \$320,000 for the purchase of two new salt trucks

We have also budgeted \$80,000 to replace a Road Mower, and \$50,000 for the landscape in the new roundabout on West Chester Road at Butler Warren.

These projects and expenditures are in addition to others managed or coordinated by Community Services.....

- The UCB Interchange Landscape
- The Station Road Pocket Park
- The Barret Road Roundabout
- The New Fire House 73
- Additional planned park improvements

- And future facility planning
Mr. Franck then answered questions from the Trustees.

Mr. Keim then addressed the Police Fund.

Projected revenues in Police are \$18.8MM demonstrate the increase in collections from the recent voter approved levy. Without levy approval, the police department would have continued receiving revenues of around \$14 million, but expenses for the department would be have been around \$17 to \$18 million with a diminishing carryover to cover costs. Now, we see a healthier outlook for the department with budgeted expenses of \$17.1 million. Amount available of \$13.7 million going into 2021.

Mr. Keim then introduced Police Chief Herzog to present his budget for the police department.

Police Chief Joel Herzog:

In 2021 we will work to fill 7 vacancies in our ranks and one police technician. We also expect three to fully retire in 2021. In 2020, we had six retire/rehires and there is the possibility of five additional retire/rehires in 2021.

Police Department proposed expenditures of \$17.15 million are less than 2020 budget.

Chief Herzog then identified some of the 2021 Police Fund highlights:

\$450,000 – Annual Vehicle Replacement – Every year we budget for replacement of vehicles that have reached certain mileage thresholds and require significant maintenance. Reliable vehicles are critical to our patrol service in the community

\$25,000 – Replace Police Canine (paid with forfeiture funds)

\$25,000 – Replace Fitness Equipment – The physical and mental fitness of our officers is critical and I would say this equipment is essential to both.

\$20,000 – Repairs to Joint Firing Range – West Chester officers use a joint firing range with costs shared by the Township and the Sheriff's Department. Having access to our own range allows officers to maintain critical shooting skills in the unlikely event they are needed.

\$20,000 – Replace Ballistic Glass in the BEAR - The BEAR was purchased in 2008 with asset forfeiture funds. The glass on the vehicle has deteriorated and requires replacement.

Chief Herzog then gave a lengthy presentation on the Department's Outreach, as well as crime data, including the following:

Part I crimes, the most violent category of crimes, were down 19.2% in 2020. (Murder, Rape, Robbery, Burglary, Larceny). 211 arrests were made for Part 1 crimes.

Part II crimes decreased 5.34% in 2020. (Assault, Drug Crimes, and lower offenses) 864 arrests were made for Part 2 crimes.

In 2020, West Chester Police made 308 drug arrests. Drugs continue to motivate crime and bring crime to the community.

West Chester Police also issued more than 1,500 citations. We issued more than 3,500 warning citations. Auto accidents numbered 1,193 in 2020 (1,495 in 2019) – 296 of these accidents resulted in injury. There were 3 fatal accidents investigated by West Chester Police in 2020.

There were 6 Crisis Response Team (SWAT) missions in 2020.

Chief Herzog answered questions from the Trustees.

Mr. Keim then gave an introduction to the Fire Fund.

Projected revenues are \$17.28MM. Fire also receives the \$4.6 million bump from the new levy, but revenues overall are a little less than Police as was always the case because the older levies are different (6 mills for Fire and 7 mills for Police). The Fire Department is budgeting \$16.1 million in expenses in 2021 with an amount available of about \$30.7 million. Mr. Keim then introduced Fire Chief to present the Fire Department Budget.

Fire Chief Prinz:

Much of 2021 budget planning took place prior to knowledge of the outcome of the levy vote. The 2021 Fire Levy Fund budget is 1.5% (\$220,000) less than 2020 budget. The EMS Fund had an overall reduction of 30.9% (\$469,534). It is our pledge to remain good stewards of the taxpayer dollars. Progress continues on The Duff Road Fire Station, which is being paid from TIF Funds and isn't part of our presentation.

Chief Prinz then identified some of the 2021 Fire Fund highlights:

\$318,000 to purchase a new Medic Unit and replace a 2009 medic unit due to age (11 Yrs), mileage (129,919) Engine Hours (10,810) equal 788,600 Road Miles and increased repair costs. This purchase was originally slated for 2018 and has been pushed back for two years.

\$100,000 has been budgeted for replacement of a simulations mannequin for EMS Training an alternative source of funding will be sought for this purchase.

\$70,000 to replace a 1996 Dodge pickup truck that is used for Brush Fires and a General Purpose vehicle An Assistance To Firefighters (AFG) grant may be available to help with this purchase.

\$60,000 for replacement of seven thermal imaging cameras used to locate victims and hidden fires.

\$40,000 for Traffic Signal Preemption (TSP) which controls the traffic signal to allow a safe passage of fire apparatus through an intersection.

Chief Prinz then gave a presentation on the Department's data:

In 2020, the Fire Department responded to 6,825 total calls for service, a .04% decrease from 2019. This decrease is believed to be largely due to people not wanting to go to the hospital during the pandemic. Of these calls, 4,718 were for emergency medical service. 2,107 of the calls were for fire response. Our Dispatch to on scene response times for all calls remain very responsive averaging 5:43. In 2020, the Fire Department conducted 561 blue print reviews. 916 fire inspections were conducted by fire department staff and 506 self-inspections were completed. Public outreach: We were able to reach more than 2,500 school-age children and more than 1,000 adults with various prevention mark, but this is significantly less than a typical year due to COVID-19.

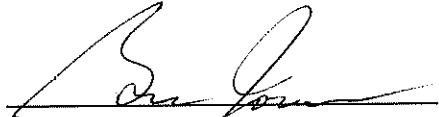
Chief Prinz then responded to Trustee questions.

Mr. Keim then concluded the Budget Workshop presentation with slides that identified TIF projects, though are not considered a part of the operational budget, but they do account for \$8,395,000 of the Township's Capital Improvement Projects in 2021.

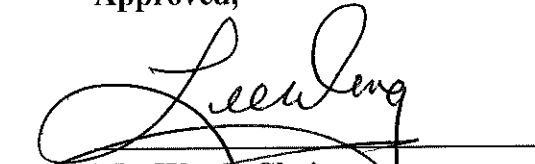
Adjournment

MOTION made at 6:06 p.m. by Mrs. Becker, seconded by Mr. Welch, to adjourn the January 19, 2020 Operational Budget Work Session. Discussion: none. **Motion carried unanimously.**

Respectfully Submitted,


Bruce Jones, Fiscal Officer

Approved,


Mr. Wong, Chairperson