

**TOWNSHIP OF O'HARA  
SPECIAL COUNCIL WORKSHOP MINUTES  
NOVEMBER 15, 2022**

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**I. OPENING PROCEDURES**

- A. Call to Order by President Smith at 7:00 p.m.
- B. Pledge of Allegiance led by President Smith.
- C. Roll Call

Council Members Present: Robert John Smith, President of Council; Cassandra R. Eccles, Vice President of Council; Richard S. Hughes, First Ward; George H. Stewart\*\*, Second Ward; Michael F. Hammill, Third Ward; Olivia T. Payne\*, Fourth Ward; John R. Denny, Jr., At-Large

Also Present: Greg Caprara, Township Treasurer; Julie A. Jakubec, CPA, CGMA, Township Manager; Charles W. Steinert, Jr., P.E., Township Engineer; Christopher Komora, Code Enforcement / Storm Water Coordinator; J. Todd Giammatteo, Public Service Superintendent; Jay Davis, Police Superintendent; Cathy Bubas, Manager's Secretary

\* - attended via zoom.com

\*\* - arrived later

**II. INTRODUCTION OF SOCIAL SERVICES COORDINATOR**

The Manager introduced Jalen Byrd, the Township's Social Services Coordinator. She noted Jalen has been shadowing Angela at Hampton Township.

Mr. Byrd indicated he would be working with the Police Officers and other staff. He uses a holistic approach when helping people.

President Smith asked if residents could just walk in. Mr. Byrd affirmed, noting his office is in the Police Department and his door is always open, even though he doesn't have a door. The Manager noted if Mr. Byrd needs to sit with someone there is a conference room where he can meet with them privately.

Mr. Denny, Jr. noted Mr. Byrd will be very busy. Manager Jakubec noted a monthly report would be provided to Council with statistics, not a lot of details due to confidentiality.

Mr. Denny, Jr. suggested getting a story about Jalen in the *Herald*.

**III. CITIZEN COMMENTS CONCERNING NON-AGENDA ITEMS**

There were no comments.

#### IV. REVIEW AND DISCUSSION

##### A. Review of the Proposed 2023 Operating and Capital Budgets

Manager Jakubec stated as presented, the revenue and expenditures proposed budget for 2023 is \$15,586,795. Rolling into 2024 the fund balance is 23.3%. The Government Finance Officer Association ("GFOA") recommends 10%; her personal preference is 15%. No increase is proposed for the general fund. Proposed budget was prepared with conservatism in mind.

President Smith noted the 2023 budget is higher than 2022. The Manager explained funds received through the American Rescue Plan could not be spent.

Mr. Denny, Jr. indicated he would suggest increasing some projects due to the considerable fund balance.

Mr. Stewart commended the Manager and staff in preparing an easy-to-read budget that the public can understand.

Manager Jakubec presented an overview of the General Fund, Sanitary Sewer Fund, Special Revenue, and Highway Aid.

##### General Fund

Sources of revenue include the real estate tax, local services tax, realty transfer tax, wage tax, federal and state grant funds, various construction related fees, vehicle code fines, the sale of used equipment on Municibid, and Police attending school events. By switching bank accounts to Dollar Bank, the Township is guaranteed a minimum interest rate, which has been increasing. The Township has received \$4,000 to \$5,000 in interest earnings per month in the general fund.

Other sources of revenue include Business Licenses, i.e. cable television franchise fees, negotiated through NHCOC by Cohen & Associates. The community center reimburses the Township for their portion of bond debt.

##### Sanitary Sewer Fund

Lennon Smith Souleret Engineers prepared a sanitary sewer rate study. A family using an average of 11,000 gallons of water per quarter will pay about \$20 more a year due to the sewer rate increase. Fees are used to repair system as required by EPA and Administrative Consent Order. The sanitary sewer tap-in fee was increased from \$3,300 to \$5,500.

##### Special Revenue

##### Storm Water Fund

Every resident pays an EDU. The average property owner pays \$95 a year.

President Smith asked if appeals are still coming in. Mr. Steinert, Jr., P.E. noted a few appeals have been submitted. Staff inspects the stormwater retention facilities to make sure they are still

working properly. President Smith verified the on-lot systems are not inspected; just the big retention facilities are inspected.

Expenses related to the Township Administration Department are associated with the general administration of Township government, including governance, Finance, Taxation and Human Services.

Expenses related to the Police Department include protection services and animal control. Police are available 24/7. The Township strives to have three Police Officers on duty each shift, but it is not always possible due to worker's compensation, vacations, etc. The Township Civil Service Commission will offer the Sergeant Examination to any Police Officers interested in a promotion. Additional training will be provided relating to active shooter, de-escalation, and diversity. Hoffman Kennels, a No-Kill shelter, collects dogs running at large and tries to find the owners. Hoffman Kennels also collects dead deer on Township roads.

The Township provides support for Fire, Ambulance and emergency Management services. The Township funds its fire departments' workers' compensation, vehicle insurance, fire hydrant rental fees and special inspections required for the Aerial engine. In addition, Pleasant Valley VFC and Parkview VFD/EMS each receive an allotment of \$75,000. An additional \$75,000 is split between Blawnox VFC and Fox Chapel VFD based on the number of calls. Parkview EMS is the Township's first provider. The Township provides equipment and vehicle insurance. An increase of 10% is recommended.

Mr. Denny, Jr. suggested an increase for staff, noting the number of ambulance calls compared to fire calls. Mr. Heilmann stated a Medic is paid \$19 an hour; an EMT is paid \$16 an hour. Mr. Denny, Jr. suggested increasing the \$30,000 allotment to \$50,000. Manager Jakubec asked if the increase is to go toward salaries.

Mr. Hughes suggested getting input from Parkview on where investment is needed. Mr. Heilmann indicates the additional funding would be used for wages and possibly vehicle maintenance. He noted three employees left in August for higher wages.

Mr. Denny, Jr. requested the ambulance allotment be increased in 2023, and meet with the ambulance service to discuss their needs

Mr. Hughes reiterated he would like to hear from Mr. Heilmann about staffing needs and other things.

Manager Jakubec indicated the budget could be amended next year. She also requested Mr. Heilmann to review staff's current wages and what is needed to provide competitive wages. Mr. Heilmann noted the ambulance service is highly funded by Medicare. Service for residents without insurance is written off. Mr. Caprara questioned the deficit created by writing off service.

Vice President Eccles recalled the federal government owes the ambulance a lot of money. Mr. Heilmann stated he has been working with Congressman Conor Lamb's office. He also indicated he would get the requested information.

Vice President Eccles inquired about benefits provided to the Medics and EMTs. It was noted the Medics and EMTs receive health benefits, AFLAC and vacation time. Vice President Eccles questioned if the Township could provide some type of pension plan. Manager Jakubec suggested possibly a 401-K with employee contribution and ambulance contribution.

Manager Jakubec stated Mr. Heilmann is also the Township Emergency Management Coordinator. Tom Polczynski is Deputy Emergency Management Coordinator and indicated they may need a new laptop. She added that Mr. Heilmann and Mr. Polczynski handle major events.

Expenses pertaining to Community Development include Engineering (Mr. Steinert, Jr., P.E.), Code Enforcement (Mr. Komora), Building Inspections (PCS), Planning (Mr. Steinert, Jr., P.E. is liaison to the Planning Commission and the Secretary attends meetings to take minutes) and Zoning (Scott Chermak of PCS is the Zoning Officer, Secretary/Receptionist Rebecca Slagel attends hearings to take minutes, and a Professional Stenographer is contracted to provide a transcript of the hearing).

Public Service expenditures include the Solid Waste Collection, Disposal and Recycling, the municipal building, vehicle and equipment repairs, road maintenance, parks, sanitary sewer services and storm water services.

Manager Jakubec informed Council about a significant cost increase in the new trash and recycling contract. Waste Management is moving to automated collection. Due to a change in the contract, which will be discussed at an emergency meeting tomorrow, she requested Council to table action on proposed resolution this evening. The issue is Waste Management wants to charge residents that want a smaller can instead of the 96-gallon can. For comparison purposes, the current recycling container is 64-gallons.

The Manager referenced changes to the municipal building, such as the new front doors and wall to separate the public's direct access to the Police and Public Service Departments. Additional security cameras and other backordered items are included in the proposed 2023 budget.

Mr. Denny, Jr. requested an allotment for coffee, water and candy for the Council meetings.

Manager Jakubec explained expenses for repairs include the Mechanic, gasoline, diesel fuel, oil, grease and parts, and making sure there is adequate supplies. Vehicles that are not used in the winter, i.e. street sweeper, will have full fuel tanks in case there is a fuel shortage.

Vice President Eccles noted an increase to memberships and dues. Manager Jakubec explained she and Mr. Giammatteo had discussed certain training for the Public Service employees.

The Manager stated parks will be maintained in 2023. Some play structure roofs have faded, and will be replaced with a metal roof like the shelters have.

Mr. Stewart inquired about a wheelchair-accessible swing. The Manager stated the adaptive playground has a wheelchair-accessible swing, but she could look into acquiring another swing.

Mr. Denny, Jr. asked if one of the tennis courts at O'Hara Community Park could be for Pickle Ball. Manager Jakubec stated the court is painted for Pickle Ball and the Meadow Park tennis courts will be changed to Pickle Ball Courts.

Ms. Harris suggested changing the grass to clover, which does not require mowing. The Manager explained clover attracts bees and could not have for the baseball fields.

Mr. Stewart inquired about types of grasses that do not grow. Mr. Giammatteo indicated some types of Kentucky or fescue grasses are slow to grow. Mr. Caprara stated there is a grass that does not grow but it is clumpy and could be a trip hazard.

Manager Jakubec noted the Township's annual allotment of \$120,000 to the community center and \$20,000 for the Library.

Vice President Eccles preferred not to make the library allotment a yearly expenditure. The Manager noted without the Township's allotment, the library may close the Sharpsburg Branch on Fridays. The Sharpsburg Library is currently open on Friday. She suggested leaving the allocation as a placeholder, and restrict any gift to the library with conditions. Mr. Stewart inquired about which communities contribute to the library and the contribution levels. The Manager indicated she would ask.

Manager Jakubec explained the sanitary sewer fund is an enterprise fund, like a business. The depreciation has increased dramatically to over 50 years.

The Manager noted Jordan Tax Service bills and collects the storm water fee. Funds are used for drain improvement projects and insurances.

Manager Jakubec noted the Township has two bond issues and payments are established per an amortization schedule.

The Manager stated money is received from the State and transferred to the Township pension plans. All clerical employees and police are in the Defined Benefit Plan; Public Service employees and Department Heads are in the Defined Contribution plan.

Mr. Denny, Jr. asked if the State funds all municipal pension plans. The Manager answered no, and explained some municipalities are in distress. The Township pension plans are fully funded.

Manager Jakubec explained capital improvement projects are determined based on the rating sheets submitted by Council. New trucks were moved to 2023 since they were unavailable this year; a Vermeer mini skid steer to replace a walk-behind loader was delivered this year and she requested a consensus of Council to move the purchase from 2023 to 2022, which Council was agreeable. It was noted Council had already approved the purchase.

In summary, the Manager noted no projects were cut from the budget, but may have been moved to a future year.

Vice President Eccles questioned an increase of \$67,000 for a ten-ton dump truck with plow and spreader. Manager Jakubec explained the dump truck was moved out and the Parks pickup truck

in. The parks truck was expected to be delivered this year, but it has not. Funds were also moved for the purchase of needed attachments for the Vermeer.

Vice President Eccles noted the Greenwood storm water retention facility was moved to 2024. The Manager stated the project is pending grant funds, and easements are needed from property owners.

Mr. Denny, Jr. asked if the Delafield Road and Ravine Street Stream Removal projects is the same scenario. Manager Jakubec explained the Township entered into an agreement with ALCOSAN for the Ravine Street Stream Removal project for \$185,000. The Township gave \$100,000 for the project upfront, and ALCOSAN can come back for the \$85,000. That is why we're carrying the \$85,000 for the Ravine Street Stream Removal project.

As for the Delafield Road Stream Removal project, the Manager noted Aspinwall Borough, ALCOSAN, the Township and Fox Chapel Borough are involved. There is a grid chamber and stream that goes from Fox Chapel into Aspinwall's combined sewer system. Shady Lane Stream was piped in the 1930's and also goes into Aspinwall's combined system. Delafield is a very difficult project and it will be very expensive. The Township always puts money in the budget to show for the consent order our willingness to participate in the project, but the price tag may make the project so difficult that it may never get undertaken. The other issue is the County will re-asphalt the road but not contribute to the stream removal project.

Manager Jakubec proceeded to review total expenditures by fund. She noted the real estate tax and wage tax remain unchanged. The real estate transfer tax is volatile; as interest rates increase home sales may slow. No Public Service Summer Interns will be hired because past experience has shown they do not have the skills. Police, Public Service and Clerical employees' salaries are negotiated in the contracts.

Mr. Bob Fischer, Parkview Volunteer Fire Department/EMS informed Council that EMS is looking to refurbish an ambulance which would save approximately \$50,000. The chassis is scheduled for refurbishing in 2024. In order to receive the chassis in 2023 and send it out for refurbishing in 2024 the order needs to be placed now. Unfortunately a quote is not available due to the time line. The stretcher system is mandated by law and this is the last ambulance that needs it. Defibrillators were replaced three years ago and were just paid off this year. He requested Council's authorization to place the order for the chassis.

It was noted that Parkview EMS also provides service to Blawnox and Sharpsburg Boroughs. Manager Jakubec stated Blawnox Borough is in a tough financial situation to contribute to the ambulance. Vice President Eccles asked if Sharpsburg gives to EMS. Mr. Tom Heilmann indicated Sharpsburg contributes \$12,000. Mr. Fischer suggested O'Hara Township Council approach Sharpsburg and Blawnox Borough Councils. The Manager indicated Mr. Fischer would also need to attend the meeting with the Councils.

Mr. Fischer questioned how the ambulances would be titled if other municipalities contribute to equipment. He stated all the ambulances are titled in O'Hara Township.

It was noted ambulances are scheduled for replacement in 2024 and 2027. In addition, Parkview also wants to refurbish a fire engine. Manager Jakubec stated the Fire Funding Committee is to

review the equipment needs and prepare a plan for equipment replacement. The fire study would help with this planning, though the ambulance is not part of the fire study.

Vice President Eccles questioned if the chassis could wait to be ordered January 1, 2023. Mr. Fischer stated it takes a year to get the chassis. Noting an ambulance is scheduled for replacement in 2024, Vice President Eccles questioned if the chassis could wait.

Manager Jakubec asked if the chassis is available under a CoStars contract, which Mr. Fischer affirmed. The Manager requested the CoStars contract number, otherwise the Township will have to bid for the chassis.

Vice President Eccles stated she preferred to wait and hear from Blawnox and Sharpsburg before deciding. Mr. Denny, Jr. and President Smith supported moving forward with ordering the chassis.

Vice President Eccles inquired about the number of ambulances Parkview has. Mr. Heilmann indicated two ambulances run; one is at the other station and has significant issues. Just one is in service. Vice President Eccles asked if there is a way to get it up and running. Mr. Heilmann noted they already rebuilt the engine. Vice President Eccles stated the Township is paying for insurance on an ambulance that is not used, which is wasting money. Manager Jakubec noted some insurance on the ambulance is needed in case of a fire.

Mr. Hughes requested the call volumes among the municipalities.

Mr. Denny, Jr. asked if it would be reasonable to let the fire companies know Council may have to put a hiatus on equipment until the fire study is done. Manager Jakubec thought that would be reasonable, noting the fire study may take six months to complete.

The Manager indicated she would make the adjustment to the budget once she received the information.

Mr. Fischer asked if that is a go and if he could call the manufacturer to place the order.

Vice President Eccles stated the budget needs to be approved first.

Motion by Mr. Hughes, seconded by Mr. Hammill to approve the ordering of the chassis as long as the Township receives the CoStars contract information. The motion carried unanimously.

Ms. Payne left the meeting at 8:10 p.m. and returned at 8:15 p.m.

#### B. Proposed Ordinance Amending the Township Sewer Rates

Manager Jakubec stated the ordinance establishes a new sanitary sewer charge of \$2.65 per 1,000 gallons compared to the 2022 rate of \$2.35, and new customer service charge of \$6.45 compared to the 2022 rate of \$5.75. A rate study was done since most of the Saxonburg Boulevard and Village Drive/Dorseyville Road sewer customers are connected. The study demonstrated a need to raise the sewer rate incrementally over time to properly fund the sewer fund. The average user will pay about \$20 more a year. The Manager requested Council's consideration to introduce the ordinance this evening.

Motion by Mr. Stewart to introduce ordinance Bill No. B-84-2022 was seconded by Mr. Hughes.

Mr. Stewart asked if there is a ceiling the sewer rates need to reach. Manager Jakubec recommended increasing the rate in smaller increments over several years.

On voice vote the motion carried unanimously.

C. Proposed Resolution Awarding a Bid and Authorizing Execution of a Contract for Residential Solid Waste and Recyclable Material Collections

The Manager recalled the North Hills Council of Governments requested bids for trash and recycling collection services on behalf of COG members. One bid was received from Waste Management, the current hauler. The contract reflects an increase of 32.75% in 2023, 9.32% in 2024, 9.27% in 2025, 9.25% in 2026 and 9.24% for alternate year 2027. The cost per household for 2023 is \$29.51; \$32.26 for 2024; \$35.25 for the year 2025; and \$38.51 in 2026. An optional year is also provided for the year 2027, with a cost of \$42.07. The costs above include a deduction of \$1.00 for direct billing to the municipality. Manager Jakubec recommended Council table action on the proposed resolution. She explained that Waste Management had said one thing yesterday and denied saying it today. It concerns the 96-gallon cart and an option for residents to change to a smaller cart. Waste Management now wants to charge the residents that want smaller carts. She noted an emergency meeting with Waste Management was scheduled for tomorrow.

Motion by Mr. Denny, Jr. to table action on a resolution awarding a bid for residential waste and recyclable material collections was seconded by Mr. Hammill and carried unanimously.

V. CONCERNS OF COUNCIL

There were no comments.

VI. CONCERNS OF STAFF

Police Superintendent Davis referenced a letter received from Aspinwall Borough Police Chief Nemic commending the O'Hara Police in the handling of a missing woman last week. He presented the letter to Council.

VII. ADJOURNMENT

Motion by Mr. Hughes to adjourn the Special Workshop was seconded by Mr. Denny, Jr. and carried unanimously. The meeting adjourned at 9:05 p.m.

  
Cathy Bubas, Manager's Secretary

Attachment: Attendance Sheet



SIGN-IN SHEET

TOWNSHIP OF O'HARA

*Council Special Workshop*

*11-15-2022*

Meeting

Date

*Bob Fischer 736 MIDWAY DR.*

Name

Address or Organization

*Tom Herlman*

*Parkview EMS*

Name

Address or Organization

*Chris Harris*

*53 Fox Pointe Dr*

Name

Address or Organization

Name

Address or Organization

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Address or Organization

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