

November 14, 2018 492

A special meeting of Upper Darby Township Council was held on Wednesday evening, November 14th, 2018 approximately five minutes after the conclusion of the regularly scheduled 7:00 meeting in the Council Meeting Room #202 of the Municipal Building, Long Lane and Garrett Road, Upper Darby, Pennsylvania

Call of the Meeting

Members of Council
Upper Darby Township
Pennsylvania

Dear Members of Council:

There will be a special meeting of the Upper Darby Township Council on Wednesday evening, November 14th, 2018 approximately five minutes after the conclusion of the regularly scheduled meeting in the Council Meeting Room #202 of the Municipal Building, Long Lane and Garrett Road, Upper Darby, Pennsylvania for the following purposes:

- 1) Public Hearing for the purpose of review of the budget for the fiscal Year 2019.
- 2) For all other purposes necessary or incidental thereto.

Roll Call

Donald P. Bonnett, Thomas P. Wagner, Jacob A. Bierling Jr., Sekela Coles, Robert Gwin, Barbarann Keffer, Marc Manfre, Lisa Faraglia, Patrick Spellman, Laura Wentz

Sheikh M. Siddique, excused

Mr. Bonnett: At this time, Council will convene the second Public Hearing on the proposed 2019 Township Budget. Anyone who wishes to address Council, please come to the podium and state your name and address for the record.

Mr. Harrison: Gerald Harrison, 29 S. Kirklyn Avenue, Upper Darby. Officer Judge sent me a line item detail for the Capital Budgets which I requested last meeting. It's a very voluminous document that spans the year 2016 up through 2023; most projects completed, some in progress and others projected at a total of \$36.8 million. Thank you for that information but what I'm trying to do is to narrow down one thing and I'm particularly interested in the \$18 million bond which was approved in 2016 and is to go through 2017 through 2021 so it is still current and is less than half way through its lifetime. What I want, if possible, is I want to see the line items, I want to know what has been spent from

that \$18 million; what that money was for and what is still remaining of that \$18 million. Along with that, I'm asking for the re-payment schedule and current status of that \$18 million, how much has been spent, how much is still there? How much has been paid back on what, how much and so forth? Also, I would like to see a similar type of line item detail on the sinking funds and the fund balance; it's the rainy day fund as I'm told. Again, specifically what has been spent, what was it for, what remains and what the remaining money is intended for. In general, when I attend these Township Council meetings as a concerned resident of Upper Darby, I'm asking for this degree of detailed information so I can try and get some kind of an idea of how our taxes are being spent. Bulk bottom line amounts do not provide the specific details necessary to arrive or approach this understanding. So, I'm narrowing it down to just this \$18 million grant. Only detailed line itemization can provide this essential information and this may ultimately require even line itemization of line items. I want to thank the Township and Officer Judge, in particular, for their willingness to work with me. I'm just an Upper Darby resident and while I'm not an expert in finance, I've had a career in science working with scientific data. Scientific work also requires handling numerical and spreadsheet type information along with quite a bit of other things. Scientific work, in general, needs for there to be an approach to an understanding of what's going on; clearly labeled numeral data and details so a clear understanding; there's no other way so I'm just trying to pick one, what to me is a fairly sizeable grant or a bond it's called here, a bond issue, to see if I can figure it out. So, that's what I'm asking for. I don't think you gave me too much detail but since it is an ongoing bond issue, I would like to see what its current status is. That's what I'm asking for.

Mr. McMullan: So, Mr. Judge provided you with the monthly expenditures of the capital money that we use month to month. We provided you with that budget. How much more detail do you need?

Mr. Harrison: It would work better for me since there is this particular \$18 million bond issue with Public Works.

Mr. McMullan: It's not just for Public Works.

Mr. Harrison: Right, and there is more information than that and I can't tell what's what. I want to see what has been earmarked for that \$18 million.

Mr. McMullan: So, you're looking for additional information. So, the breakdown of his description and the cost associated with that description, you're requesting what?

Mr. Harrison: I'm requesting that part of it be identified to me or provided separately that is part of this \$18 million bond.

Mr. McMullan: From what he gave me, you can identify the amount that's spent and the amount that's remaining, correct?

Mr. Harrison: Not on that \$18 million. It's a total. It's a big number.

Mr. McMullan: But, what was handed to you last meeting, I believe that gave you a balance of what we started with and what was spent and what is remaining.

Mr. Harrison: Of that \$18 million?

Mr. McMullan: Yes. I just want to be clear so I can communicate this back; so you're looking for more of a description of what funds from each line item were used to purchase?

Mr. Harrison: Sure. If I can get that

Mayor Micozzie: But it would say vehicles, \$200K. And it could be a trash truck, a highway yard dump truck; we know we need replacement vehicles. When he goes to do it, it comes through the process a truck catches on fire, a trash truck, that's vehicles. Fire trucks are fire trucks. I don't think there is a line item identified for, well come of the cars are, police cars.....

Mr. McMullan: Correct. We'll give you what we have. But, you do have the balances.

Mr. Harrison: Right. I do believe so. Yes.

Mr. McMullan: So, you're just looking to find out what each item costs?

Mr. Harrison: I'm looking for what correlates directly to that particular \$18 million bond.

Mayor Micozzie: We can give you a bond printout.

Mr. Harrison: What items came under that umbrella?

Mr. McMullan: OK.

Mr. Harrison: What the current status is since we're a couple years into it and there are still three years thereabouts left to go on it. I'd like to get a status. Thank you.

Mr. McMullan: Thank you.

Mayor Micozzie: Thank you, Mr. Harrison.

Mr. Bonnett: Is there anyone else wishing to address Council on the proposed 2019 Township Budget?

Ms. Wilson: Marguerite Wilson, 824 Drexel Avenue, Drexel Hill. When I was here last week or whenever the last thing was, I expressed my concern about that fact that the police

budget is going down by almost \$1 million from the actual, for 2018, the projected for 2019. It's going down by \$982,715.00. First of all, I'm concerned about not funding what the Police Department needs and I'm wondering why is that going down?

Mr. McMullan: It's going up because we increased the amount of overtime. The Mayor is making a proposal to make a commitment to the overtime, which in the past has been questioned because of again, it was a best guesstimate. But, as you know, this year we are borrowing from the fund balance to cover it. So, it is actually increasing for 2019. Well, the proposed increase for 2019, I believe the overtime amount is \$2 million.

Ms. Wilson: But, the overall budget is going down by \$982,715.00 and I don't know.....

Mr. McMullan: It's in a different line item. I'd have to look at it to see.....

Ms. Wilson: I'm looking the line item and for 2018 our actual was like \$322 million and our 2019 projected is \$312 thousand so it's going down and it's even on the summary.

Mr. McMullan: That could be a matter of some projected retirees as well. That could plan a part in that. I'd have to look to see exactly what you're looking at. I can compare with you after this meeting so I know we're comparing apples to apples.

Ms. Wilson: Well, I have the summary. I have the line item expense and they agree that the budget is going down from the actual by \$982,715.00.

Mr. McMullan: That could be a piece of it; the calculated retirees for 2019 with higher salaries than incoming new hires. I believe we're expecting some retirees in 2019.

Ms. Wilson: Because you're also going to have to cover increase in salaries.

Mr. McMullan: Correct. But at a lower rate than veteran officers.

Ms. Wilson: OK. I'm just concerned because it seemed like last year you kind of underestimated and had to take it out of the rainy day fund. And, when the rainy day comes, you need to have enough.

Mr. McMullan: Right, so this year we are planning full steam ahead for the overtime.

Ms. Wilson: OK, so if you could just figure out why this is going down, I'd be happy. The other general question I have is that our anticipated income versus our projected expenditures, there is like a \$3 million arrearage. So, we're going to be taking in \$3 million less than we're estimate----this is for the whole budget; then we're going to be spending and I'm wondering why that is and where that money is going to come from.

Mr. McMullan: Well we are looking at being aggressive with collecting delinquencies.

We think that switching to a new company, which Council has voted on. I believe that was in October. We're switching from the current company to a new company that has a more aggressive approach. So, it's a best guess that we are looking at collecting, based on meeting with that company, that is where we're looking at collecting that revenue and from some additional fees that we're looking at implementing in 2019.

Ms. Wilson: Yeah, I guess I'm just concerned because you're projecting based on an unknown. You don't have experience with this company so you're saying we think this is going to happen. And again, the shortfall is going to have to come out of the rainy day fund. So, to me, the first year of a contract you would be very conservative until you say how it's going to work out and then in subsequent years you have some information as a baseline. But again, I'm concerned between the police budget and this difference that we're going to wind up going into the rainy day fund and when a rainy day comes, we're just not going to have it.

Mayor Micozzie: It's not \$3 million if we had \$2 million last year.

Mr. McMullan: We had \$2 million.

Mayor Micozzie: -----and the average first time state goal is usually 28-32% of what is out on the street and there is \$5 million on the street. So, we really underestimated ----

Mr. McMullan: We underestimated the potential collection.

Mayor Micozzie: We're pretty comfortable with the \$1 million figure.

Ms. Wilson: OK, so that's \$1.3 million so you're still down 2.7, no 1.7. I'm just saying that I have the line items reports. This and this, there is a difference of \$3 million in the hole.

Mr. McMullan: Again, our goal is to be aggressive with this company and have the collections come in above that.

Ms. Wilson: OK.

Mr. Bonnett: Is there anyone else wishing to address Council on the proposed 2019 Township Budget?

Ms. Nottingham: Hi. I'm Stephanie Nottingham, 7547 Parkview Road. This week in my neighborhood, my community, we did the leaf clean-up because this is leaf clean-up week, right? We used leaf bags and put them out at the curb. But, the trash, we pay for the weight for our trash to be disposed of? We pay for the weight?

Mayor Micozzie: No, we don't. Do you mean do we pay as the Township or you? The

Township does.

Stephanie Nottingham: But, the trash men picked up the leaves on Tuesday but we put the leaves out on the curb so they could pick it up on Wednesday for recycling.

Mayor Micozzie: Leave your number and I'll have to get Dan to find out what happened.

Stephanie Nottingham: I was just trying to save the Council money because I thought they take the leaves and recycle them and make mulch and then we can use mulch to better our community.

Mayor Micozzie: Is it normally picked up in front of your house?

Stephanie Nottingham: The bags of leaves?

Mayor Micozzie: No, your trash.

Stephanie Nottingham: Yes.

Mayor Micozzie: Your trash is picked up in front. OK. I did see a Facebook message on that so I will find out.

Mr. McMullan: Leave your information please.

Stephanie Nottingham: Yes. Thank you.

Mr. Bonnett: Is there anyone else wishing to address Council on the proposed 2019 Township Budget?

Ms. Hallam: Good evening. Jennifer Hallam, 4719 Woodland Avenue. I just want to start by saying that I do understand that as a Township we deal with a limited amount of money which Peggy just pointed out; we might not even have enough money to fund what is being proposed in the current budget. So, I acknowledge that fact before what I'm about to say. So, I am a media producer. I work with \$1 million budgets. I understand budgets and something that I understand about budgets is that budgets are a reflection of both necessity and value. What I see in the budget that is being proposed is a value for a safe community, which I appreciate and basic services for members of the community, which I also appreciate. What I'm not seeing in the budget are some things to support the values that I would appreciate in a community and that is having an informed, engaged, vibrant community with a thriving economy. And I'm not saying that there are not things in the budget that would support any of that but what I am saying is that I'm not seeing those things reflected in a sustained and coherent way in the current budget. And again, I'm talking about more than maintaining what we currently have. I'm talking about thinking about how we're going to energize our community, what we're envisioning for our

community's future and thinking about that as we plan our budget. If not this time, then the next budget that we come to. Specifically, I had requested at the last meeting a list of job descriptions from Mr. Judge which he did tell me after the meeting that he would provide to me. I received in the mail after following up with him last week a letter indicating that he had submitted it as a right-to-know request and that he was claiming a 30-day extension to gather that information. I would like to point out that in the Administrative Code, Article 6, Section 601; it is indicated that job descriptions should be provided by each Department Head to the Chief Administrative Officer and that the Chief Administrative Officer should have those on file in his office. So, I'm not entirely sure why there is a 30-day hold-up. If that's the case, I would expect that they would be able to be printed within 5 days. Nevertheless, the reason that I requested those is that I wanted to see, you know we spend a huge amount of our budget on salaries, so who are we employing and in what capacity? Is there room for us to maneuver some of these positions that are open or the positions that are currently filled so that they are reflecting a value of having an engaged, informed vibrant citizenry and a thriving economy. So, I was unable to attain that information. But, what I want to say is that there are 3 particular areas that I would like to see reflected in the budget. I would like to see them reflected in the budget as specific line items as this has to do with structuring as well. But, whether it's those departments or sub-departments, one is Information and Communications, the second is and that would include some of the things that I talked about last week; a re-designed, re-developed website and webmaster, a community outreach, line for budget items. There is a Community Services line in the budget that currently has no accounting number attached to it and no budget attached to it. And then the third is economic development. Now, I have looked into several of the cities and municipalities in the state that are comparable with Upper Darby in terms of population. I'll give you an example; the city of Erie which is about 10,000 greater in population but comparable, has in their list of positions a marketing strategist, a community liaison, a planning director, a media and innovations strategist, a citizen relations coordinator as well as a department of economic and community development, which includes a director, an assistant director, grant writer, business development person and others. I don't see anything like that again in a sustained and coherent way reflected in our budget. The city of Reading which has a population of 88,000, about 5000 more than Upper Darby, has a very robust website. I suggest that everyone on Council take a good look at the website because it's a good model for what we could be providing. It includes online payment options to citizens. It includes open data. It includes city financial data reports and an electronic plan submission area. They also have a citizen's service center as one of their departments as well as a community development department. The city of Scranton, slightly smaller than Upper Darby with 77,000 people, also has an office of economic and community development as well as an Information Technology Department which provides citywide information, support and network, information services, internet services, graphic and web design. Again, speaking to the points that I made last week about communication and what would help, I think, our governing bodies to communicate with citizens and engage citizens. Those are all things that I think Upper Darby could benefit from and again, I would hope that you would take some of these ideas into consideration. Again, I understand that there is a limited amount

of money that needs to cover a lot of needs but I think if we're thinking about Upper Darby going forward, we need to think about more than just maintaining what we have right now and we need to think about how are we going to grow, how are we going to energize, how are we going to keep people engaged in what is happening here? That is directly related to the budget. Thank you.

Mr. Bonnett: Thank you.

Mayor Micozzie: All of those are nice and I think we as a Council can be able to provide those. Some of them you mentioned we already have so when you get the job descriptions you'll see that. No question, I know that Tommy is working hard. Some of these requests have to be treated, because it stays in his office; I think we explained to you that the job descriptions, some of them are in a bargaining proposal that has come to us and we have to review them. As an example, right now, Erie is \$11 million in deficit for their projected 2019 city budget. You can have all of those things. I am a pretty fiscally conservative person. I would love to have all that. We are going to have a new website; we are not going to have a webmaster. The website will be able to be introduced by all of my directors and they will be trained on it. Council at any time can add to this budget. It's my fiscally conservative budget because we have no room to raise taxes. We're bringing good jobs in. We're bringing good funding in and a lot of reason we're at zero is because we have success. I'm just saying that the ones we're talking about though, these cities are in desperate, desperate, desperate fiscal crises. How you get there is when you budget things that all feel good but nobody can pay for them. I love all your ideas. I think they're great and I'm implementing ----- So, I think me and you can sit down and see what we can come up with.

Ms. Hallam was yelling out from the audience.

Mr. Bonnett: Excuse me. Could you come back to the podium so we can get that on record, please? Thank you.

Ms. Hallam: I think that part of what we're missing here is thinking about short term versus long term. And, I think we have a budget right now that deals with the short term. I don't think that it deals with the long term.

Mayor Micozzie: I don't agree with that.

Ms. Hallam: That's fine. You don't have to agree with that. I think that part of what I'm suggesting is that if we invested more in the community and economic development that that would open up more possibilities for greater revenue generation in our Township which would help to pay for some of these things. And so, I'm talking about investments that have long term payoffs. You're not going to see payoffs on them right away. As far as those other cities being in debt, you know, how they're paying for those things is another matter. That's not what I'm talking about. What I'm talking about is that these are

things that exist. They are things that I think would benefit our Township. I think that we need to be open-minded. We need to think creatively. We need to have some imagination and have some vision. And, that's what I see lacking in the budget. And that's all. Thank you.

Mr. Bonnett: Is there anyone else wishing to address Council on the proposed 2019 Township Budget? Seeing no one else wishing to speak, I therefore declare that this Public Hearing is closed. At this time, I would ask Council for a motion to move the 2019 Township Budget to the December 5th Council meeting for adoption.

Mr. Wagner: So moved.

Mr. Spellman: Second.

Mr. Bonnett: Moved and seconded. All those in favor signify by saying aye. Opposed say no. The ayes have it.

Adjournment

Mr. Bonnett: At this time, a Motion would be in order for adjournment.

Mr. Wagner: So moved.

Mr. Spellman: Second.

Mr. Bonnett: Moved and seconded. All those in favor signify by saying aye. Opposed? The ayes have it. This meeting is adjourned.

Respectfully Submitted,

Richard G. Nolan

Richard G. Nolan, Chief Municipal Clerk