

Jim Thorpe Borough Council
November 1, 2023
Budget Work Session Meeting

Meeting called to order at 6:32 p.m. by President Gregory Strubinger with the pledge of allegiance and moment of silence for the armed forces, first responders and their families.

Roll Call of Members

Gregory Strubinger	Joanne Klitsch	Jay Miller-arrived @ 6:44
Michael Yeastedt	Bob Schaninger-absent	Tom Chapman-absent
Michael Rivkin	Solicitor Nanovic-absent	Mayor Sofranko-absent
Police Chief Schatz	Borough Manager Sterner	Secretary Brooke Klotz
Borough Engineer-absent		

Public Comment

None

Proposed 2024 Budget

The budgets are interactive with transfers between the funds. The amounts come from estimates from vendors or past performance. The money for the Street Department comes from multiple funds- general, liquid fuels, sanitation, and capital projects. \$99,787,562.00 is the amount of assessed taxable properties.

Manager Sterner started with the Liquid Fuels Fund. The last draft, winter snow removal was included. It has now been moved into the Sanitation Fund to allow for a smaller balance. If snow removal would have remained in Liquid Fuels, over \$50,000.00 ending balance would have had to remain to cover the costs for snow removal in 2025.

In the General Fund, the streets funds items were reallocated. This lowered the millage increase to .64 from the 1.84 that was initially proposed in the last budget draft. This would be an average increase of \$44.61. The total millage is 17.85 and includes the 1 mill for the Fire Department. Line 301.000 Real Property Taxes on page one and line 403.114 Tax Collector Salary decreased from the last draft, that's due to not having as big of a millage increase. There were items from the 430.000 Public Service Expenses that were deducted and will come out of the Sanitation Fund. Street Lights have been added to the General Fund from Liquid Fuels and Sanitation.

In the Sewer Fund, there will be a 2% increase, which is an \$0.86 increase in the average utility bill based on a 3000 gallon use. There was an increase to Line 364.600 Land Lease Rental. There was an increase to Line 427.350 General Insurance. There was an increase to Line 427.104 Wages/Supervisor. This is because the current Sewer Supervisor is retiring at the beginning of the year, but is using acquired vacation time before officially being taken off of the Borough's payroll. A new Sewer Supervisor will need to start at the beginning of the year, therefore causing an overlap. With the 2% increase, the Borough will be able to carry over \$65,014.00 into 2025 to help with future

maintenance and upgrades to the Sewer Plant. If Council should decide they would not like a 2% increase, then only \$42,949.00 would carry over to 2025. Jay Miller asked how much money would be left in the Sewer Capital Reserve Fund. There is still a substantial amount left, but it should be continued to be built up for future maintenance and upgrades.

In the Water Fund, there will be a 5.75% increase, which is a \$3.36 increase in the average utility bill based on a 3000 gallon use. There was a decrease to Line 378.100 Water Billings Income and Line 378.101 Water Penalties. This is due to the decreasing the proposed 10% increase from the first budget draft. In Line 448.703 New Equipment, the money for a new generator was removed. Borough Council would like to get the current generator fixed and push off purchasing a new one. Manager Sterner reminded Council that the Borough needs to start saving for new water meter replacement as the current ones are nearing the end of their life expectancy. The water meters were last replaced in 2012.

In the Liquid Fuels Fund, the adjustments were the reallocations of items for the Streets Department.

In the Capital Reserve Funds, everything stayed as what was proposed last week, with the exception of Sanitation which has to be updated.

In the Sanitation Fund, there will be a 102.75% increase, which will bring residential garbage utility billing up from \$25.00 it currently is a month to \$50.69 a month. The bids came in much higher than expected for the upcoming 2024 Garbage and Recycling Contract. The contract the Borough has with Tamaqua Transfer that is set to expire started before Covid and all of the ramifications that came from it. The costs of depositing the trash at the landfill, insurance, wages, and vehicle maintenance are what is driving the cost of the proposed new contract up. Line 364.101 Penalties-Sanitation will need to be adjusted from \$17,389.00 to \$20,739.00. 23.3% of non-sanitation items account for the Sanitation Budget. Jay Miller asked if it was possible to tier the billing over the course of the first year so it's not such a shock to the residents.

MOTION by Jay Miller, second by Michael Rivkin to **adjourn the meeting**. There were no comments. Motion carries 5-0. The meeting ended at 8:39 p.m.

Respectfully Submitted,

Brooke Klotz
Borough Secretary