

Jim Thorpe Borough Council  
October 25, 2023  
Budget Work Session Meeting

Meeting called to order at 6:31 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-left @7:38	Jay Miller
Michael Yeastedt	Bob Schaninger-absent	Tom Chapman
Michael Rivkin	Solicitor Nanovic-absent	Mayor Sofranko
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.

Capital Projects Fund-Highway Projects was the first item discussed. The Borough is still waiting to hear if the Front Street Project. If not awarded, the ending balance would be significantly more. There is additional money set aside in this fund for the 5<sup>th</sup> Street Project, Downtown Multimodal Grant Project, and match reserves for the projects.

In the Special Revenue Fund-Ladder Truck, the Borough is anticipating the sale of the old pumper truck which has not happened yet. There are two major expenses, lease payment for the two new fire truck the Fire Department received. Jay Miller said he would like to see the principal get paid off for the loans and start saving money in the reserve. Mayor Sofranko said he thought the mills for the Fire Department were ½ a mill. Manager Sterner explained the current Ordinance is for 1 mill.

The Sewer Fund's major expenses are trench shoring, the yearly and bi-yearly items, and the cost of chemicals which has skyrocketed since Covid. There will be a 2% increase in billing for the residents. This increase will help cover the cost of chemicals. The current average monthly bill will see an increase around \$2.54 a month. Money from the sewer fund will be transferred over to the Capital Reserve Fund for the Borough Facilities Projects. The Sewer Supervisor will be retiring at the beginning of 2024. There were additional funds budgeted for the transition of a new Supervisor, training, and any payouts (sick time, etc.).

The Water Fund will see a 10% increase in utility billing. This will help cover the costs for the Center Avenue Water Main Project, which is projected to cost around \$2 million,

yearly maintenance for one of the water tanks (\$150,000.00), turbidimeters with installation (\$75,000.00 total), and a new generator (\$60,000.00). The Water Department is in need of two (2) generators, but is only being budgeted for one (1). The generator is still in good shape, but the control panel's technology is obsolete and it's hard to get parts. Most contractor's do not want to work on the generators the Borough currently has because the Borough doesn't have a contract with them. Jay Miller said he would like to contact other local municipalities to see who their generator contractors are. He also said he would like to discuss with the Water Supervisor some of the equipment listed on the budget to purchase. He feels a 10% increase in utility billing is too much.

The Sanitation Fund is looking at a 70% increase in utility billing. This is because the current garbage and recycling contract is ending January 31, 2024. The current contract pricing the Borough has with Tamaqua Transfer was pre-Covid. Since then, cost have substantially risen for garbage haulers. Based on local municipalities who have recently placed their garbage and recycling contracts up for bid, the Borough is looking at a 70% increase in utility billing. There are some items that the Sanitation Fund had previously paid for that will be paid out of Liquid Fuels. Jay Miller questioned how much of the budget is paying for the non-sanitation items. A new Wheel Loader will be purchased and financed for the next five (5) years. Jay Miller asked how much the resale value is of the Volvo Wheel Loader the Borough currently owns. He also recommended leaving money in the Capital Reserve Funds in case the old landfill cover would break.

The General Fund is looking at a 1.84 mill increase, which amounts to an average increase of \$128.25. There are some larger than normal or new expenses for the upcoming year- Grant Writing and Incidentals, Diligent Roof, Police Officer retirement and replacement officer, Public Service Streets Engineer, Public Service Street Lighting, Contracted Services for Parks, and debt principal for a new Police vehicle. There will be money transferred over to the Capital Reserve Fund for the Borough Facilities Projects. There were no funds allotted for a Public Service Manager. Mike Yeastedt asked if anything was budgeted for storm drains and inlets.

Borough Council was not comfortable with the millage increase and water increase. They would like to see some things trimmed from the budget.

**MOTION** by Mike Yeastedt, second by Jay Miller to **adjourn the meeting**. There were no comments. Motion carries 5-0. The meeting ended at 8:40 p.m.

Respectfully Submitted,

Brooke Klotz  
Borough Secretary