

This meeting was publicly advertised in the NP Reporter, listed on the Township website and posted in the Township building lobby.

**1. Call to order.**

The November 1, 2023, Special Meeting of the Board of Commissioners was called to order at 11:00 AM by President of the Board, Denise Hull.

**2. Pledge of Allegiance**

Township Manager, Sandra Zadell led the Pledge of Allegiance.

**3. Roll Call**

Roll call was taken by Ms. Weaver, Assistant Township Manager. The following individuals were in attendance:

Denise M. Hull	President
Katherine D. Carter	Vice President
Liz K. McNaney	Commissioner
Martha A. Simelaro	Commissioner
Ruth S. Damsker	Commissioner
Sandra Zadell	Township Manager
Megan Weaver	Assistant Township Manager
Nathan Crittendon	Finance Director

**4. Public Comments & Concerns (limit of five minutes per individual)**

Mr. Fred Hencken made a statement on the scheduling of budget work sessions and suggested they be scheduled in the evening.

**5. 2023 Updated Forecast Review**

Changes from Work Session #1

Ms. Zadell explained that since the last Budget Work session, the budget went from a \$666,000 deficit to a \$446,000 deficit without any changes to revenue. The Township had received updated Medical Insurance Costs, and we were able to see significant savings. Staff also updated the forecast through September and found spending areas reduced.

**6. Fund Balance/Reserve Funding Review**

Ms. Zadell presented the Projected General Fund reserve balance. She explained that reserves are in place to help fund the gap during hard times. In Upper Gwynedd the trend since 2019 has represented about 54%-107%. The 2024 proposed budget as it stands today would leave us with \$11.9 million,

53.78% spending in Reserves. The Government Finance Officer Association (GFOA) recommends a minimum of 16.9% of spending in reserves.

Ms. Zadell reviewed the Capital Reserve Fund. She explained that the projects in the Capital Plan are funded with many sources. The Capital Reserve Fund is expected to expend \$6,396,223 in the next 5 years. The Township has a goal of \$315,000 each year to be on track to fund all projects slated from this fund. Each year the Township tends to do better than that goal. Grant funding that also helps offset that burden.

Ms. Zadell reviewed the transfers to Capital Reserves from the years 2014-2024. She noted that in this point of the budget, we are estimating a \$750,00 transfer to Capital Reserves in 2023, versus our goal of \$315,000. The trend has been that we do better than our goal most years.

## **7. Review of Decision Items**

Ms. Zadell reviewed a list of recommended potential cuts that the Board of Commissioners can consider. She explained that if all the cuts were made, there would be a \$167,085 surplus.

### **Fire Fund**

Ms. Zadell explained that staff is recommending a \$52,000 cut due to the \$50,000 funding that UGTFD will be receiving from the Safer Grant to fund the stipend program. The Safer Grant is a guaranteed grant for the next 3 years. She noted that there is enough in reserves to fund the deficit however they will need to plan for future equipment.

Ms. Zadell stated that North Penn Fire has also requested funding and service a portion of the Township for QRS calls.

After Board Discussion, the Commissioners agreed to fund the UGFD endowment minus \$52,000. The Commissioners also agreed to fund North Penn Fire \$7,500.

### **General Fund**

#### **Community Contributions**

Ms. Zadell stated that the Commissioners would also need to decide on the level of funding for Community Contributions. North Wales Area Library is requesting \$75,000 and, in the past, the Commissioners funded them and Nor Gwyn Baseball at \$50,000.

Ms. Zadell mentioned that Nor Gwyn provided a request that included \$250,000 which is included as a recommended partial cut. In addition, VMSC is requesting funding of \$100,000. Ms. Hull asked if other Townships were contributing to VMSC. Ms. Zadell responded that other North Penn municipalities would be contributing as well. She had received information that Hatfield and Montgomery Township were also contributing \$100,000, Towamencin contributing \$40,000 and she believed Hatfield borough would be giving a little too.

Ms. Simelaro asked if Nor Gwyn provides a budget and if North Wales Borough contributes. Ms. McNaney was able to confirm that Nor Gwyn only requests funding from Upper Gwynedd Township.

Ms. Carter asked if Upper Gwynedd Township provides Nor Gwyn with in-kind contributions as well. Mr. Crittendon was able to confirm that the Township provides on average \$22,000 to \$30,000 in-kind contributions to Nor Gwyn. The Township does not give any in-kind contributions to other groups. Ms. Zadell said with exception to the story walk that Parks & Rec provides for the Library. However, that takes very little staff time.

Ms. Hull believes that the Township should increase the contribution to the Library to \$60,000 due to rising costs. The Township has funded the library at \$50,000 for the last 3 years.

Ms. Zadell noted that the Library did experience a 6.5% increase in UGT residents in 2023, so this increased funding would be commensurate with the increase. It was noted that the Library does service all ages of residents throughout the township, whereas Nor Gwyn is a specific group.

#### **IT**

Ms. Zadell stated that staff included a potential cut of \$10,000 for professional services to IntegraOne. The Township has a new IT specialist starting next week, so there will be less of a need for IntegraOne. All of the Commissioners were in support of this cut of \$10,000 from the IT budget.

#### **Facilities**

Ms. Zadell stated that staff included potential cuts from the Facilities budget which include the Gate at the Police overhang for \$15,000 and a backup generator for \$40,000. Ms. Zadell noted that the Gate has been a previous budgeted item not completed in previous years. After discussion with the Board, all agreed to cutting \$15,000 for the Police Overhang gates.

#### **Fire Marshal**

Ms. Zadell is recommending cutting some of the gates and prioritizing adding gates in the worst flood areas. It would make sense to do a few at a time and the Township can also work on acquiring grants. Mr. McCann was requesting a total of 7 gates, and she is recommending a few for 2024 and the rest for future budget years. It would be good to start with a few to see how effective they are. After discussion from the Board, all agreed to removing 5 gates and keeping 2 in the budget. Mr. Crittendon noted that this would be a \$35,000 cut from the budget.

Ms. Zadell is also recommending, with the support of Mr. McCann, cutting the camera from this year's budget. This would reflect a \$4,000 cut. All the Commissioners were in support of this \$4,000 cut from the Fire Marshal's budget.

Ms. Zadell said another potential cut would be the drone for \$16,000. After discussion, the Board members were in favor of keeping this in the budget.

#### **Public Works**

Ms. Zadell mentioned that there are several areas where stormwater repair is budgeted for, both in operations vs. maintenance. Ms. Zadell believes that preventative spray lining is where the Township should be investing. It is far less costly than ripping out/replacing pipe and extends the life of the pipes for 50 years. She recommends keeping funding for spray lining and reducing the budget for unidentified stormwater infrastructure projects. Ms. Zadell also included the potential for cutting the replacement of the 1997 10-wheel dump truck. After discussion, the Commissioners agreed to cut \$50,000 from

Maintenance & Repairs-Storm sewer, reduce the unidentified storm sewer repairs by \$50,000 to \$150,000, and reduce the spray lining item by \$50,000.

**Parks & Rec**

Ms. Zadell provided several potential cuts from the Parks & Recreation Department. Ms. Zadell is recommending delaying the Veterans memorial until the CPROS is completed. The Commissioners agreed to delay the project and cut \$8,000 for the Veterans memorial project.

Ms. Hull voiced concerns about the paving of the pool parking lot since it's so much added impervious. She asked if there was an alternative option. Ms. Zadell responded that the CPROS can consider the parking lot as part of the study. It is already planned as a 2-year project, but it can be delayed to 2025 & 2026. All of the Commissioners were in agreement with this \$40,000 cut from the Capital Fund.

Ms. Hull requested to add money to the Administration engineering line item. A friend's son was hit by a car at the Royal Farms intersection, and they requested changing the pedestrian buttons to stop all traffic. Ms. Zadell noted that the Township would need this funding to conduct a traffic study because there would need to be justification for a modification such as this. Ms. Zadell would recommend that they have a traffic study evaluate the walkability for the intersection at Royal Farms & the intersection at Sumneytown/Valley Forge. After discussion, all the Board members agreed with adding an additional \$10,000 to support this.

Ms. Hull also received a request from a resident for the Commissioners to consider prohibiting trucks from traveling over the bridge located at the Mumbower Mill. This is a County owned bridge, but the Township does have the jurisdiction to limit traffic. Ms. Zadell noted that this would also require a traffic study and could have unintended consequences. There is a balance between history and functionality. After discussion, the Board agreed not to take on this project at this time and will look to revisit in 5 years.

**Police**

Ms. Zadell recommended cutting one of the two proposed new full-time officers. This would be a \$69,000 cut to remove one of the two officers. Ms. Zadell noted that in 2022 the Township hired Safe City solutions to evaluate our staffing in the police department any the study recommended 25 sworn officers whereas the Township currently has 22 sworn officers. Ms. Zadell did confirm with Chief Duffy that a Traffic Safety Unit can still be created with the addition of only 1- full time officer.

Ms. Hull is in support of hiring 1 additional full-time officer but believes that we should add 1 at a time to allow them to evaluate their needs. After discussion, all Board members are in favor of adding 1 additional officer and cutting \$69,000 to be cut from adding an additional officer.

**Wastewater**

Ms. Zadell highlighted that the WWTP currently shows a \$671,000 deficit. The Board has the choice to make cuts or raise the sewer rates. Ms. Zadell reminded the Board that she first brought up this topic at last year's presentation and noted that there has not been a rate increase since 2017. Ms. Zadell and Mr. Crittendon have spoken about this at length and are recommending an 18% rate increase. This increase represents a \$75 per year per household increase, allowing for a \$360,000 surplus. If the Board elects an increase equal to \$50 per year per household, it will only result in a \$16,000 surplus, which is

not adequate for funding future capital projects and ultimately lead to the need for near future rate increases.

Ms. Zadell added that Upper Gwynedd Township is currently the 3<sup>rd</sup> cheapest and we will continue to be that. Ms. Zadell would like this to be decided today for the 1<sup>st</sup> presentation at the budget work session. After discussion, all Board members agreed to the \$75/year per household increase for 2024.

Ms. Zadell provided recommendations for areas that could be cut in the Wastewater budget. After discussion, the Board agreed to cutting \$30,000 from I&I project cleaning/inspections and \$11,000 from training.

#### Administration

Ms. Zadell said that she is recommending cutting \$2,000 from the employee gym upgrades. The Township just recently made several upgrades to the gym. After discussion, all Board members agreed to cut \$2,000 from the employee gym upgrades.

Ms. Zadell asked for direction regarding Community Contributions. After discussion, the Board agreed to a community donation to Nor Gwyn Baseball in the amount of \$50,000, a community donation to the North Wales library in the amount of \$60,000 which includes the passes, and funding to the VMSC in the amount of \$100,000.

Ms. Zadell also noted that Rudolph Clarke was seeking a rate increase of \$10/hour. After discussion, the Board was agreeable to a \$5 increase due to there not being an increase in the prior year.

#### 8. Questions

There were no additional questions from the Board or members of the public.

Meeting Adjourned.



Respectfully Submitted,

Sandra Zadell  
Township Manager/Secretary