

**PLAINFIELD TOWNSHIP
BOARD OF SUPERVISORS MEETING
OCTOBER 28, 2021**

The second regular monthly meeting of the Plainfield Township Board of Supervisors was held on Thursday, October 28, 2021 at the Plainfield Township Municipal Building, which is located at 6292 Sullivan Trail, Nazareth, PA 18064.

Vice-Chairman Glenn Borger called the meeting to order at 7:00 P.M.

The Pledge of Allegiance was performed.

ROLL CALL:

The following Supervisors answered roll call: Vice-Chairman Glenn Borger, Jane Mellert, Stephen Hurni and Joyce Lambert. Chairman Randy Heard was excused from attending the meeting.

Also present was Township Manager, Thomas Petrucci.

I. NEW BUSINESS

1. Executive Session Announcement:

Tom Petrucci announced that the Board of Supervisors convened in executive session from 6:00 PM to 7:00 PM to discuss matters relating to personnel.

2. Consideration of Approval of Public Fire Hydrant- South Broadway (S.R. 512):

With a portion of the water main on S.R. 512 getting replaced by Pennsylvania American Water, the Township has the opportunity to install a new fire hydrant between the McDonald's and the Citgo gas station. The fire hydrant installation is supported by the fire departments (both Plainfield and Wind Gap) to eliminate the need to stretch fire lines across S.R. 512, which causes significant traffic issues.

ACTION: Motion was made by Stephen Hurni and seconded by Joyce Lambert to approve the installation of a public fire hydrant between the McDonald's and the Citgo location on South Broadway (S.R. 512) and to authorize the monthly charges (~\$40.00 per month) associated with the installation.

Prior to the vote, Vice-Chairman, Glenn Borger, asked if there were any comments from the governing body or the public.

Resident Chuck Piazza asked what the Township currently pays for fire hydrants, and Tom Petrucci responded that it is about \$2,000.00 per month.

Glenn Borger noted that the Township has experienced issues with the water flow of the hydrant in the past- citing the Nico’s Polymers fire.

Motion approved. Vote 4-0.

3. Review of 2022 Plainfield Township Budget (Proposed):

The 2022 Proposed Budget does not include a real estate tax millage increase or any secured borrowings, loans or bonds for 2022. The Township has not had any debt service since 2015. Tom Petrucci indicated that the focus of the 2022 budget is to complete projects that are readily identified for a 2022 completion timeframe. It was also identified that the Township’s second ARPA distribution in the amount of \$326,149.126 is anticipated to be received during the 2022 fiscal year. This amount will be transferred into a separate account, as recommended by the United States Treasury. The first distribution in the amount of \$326,149.26 was received by the Township in 2021. Factoring out this distribution, the General Fund for 2022 increased in total by an amount of \$746.22. Tom Petrucci then provided an overview of all funds associated with the 2022 Proposed Plainfield Township Budget, which is summarized as follows:

2022 Proposed Budget – Summary of Revenues

Fund	2021 Budget (Adopted)	2022 Budget (Proposed)	Unappropriated Fund Balance at Conclusion of 2022 Fiscal Year (Projected)
General Fund	\$3,341,819.67	\$3,668,715.15	\$3,500,000.00
Highway Aid Fund	\$264,778.12	\$269,198.18	\$640,000.00
Host Retro Agreement Fund	\$1,450,000.00	\$1,973,730.00	\$3,964,270
Capital Reserve and Construction Fund	\$2,171,010.90	\$2,592,040.00	\$0.00
Recreation Fund	\$393,997.50	\$527,750.00	\$160,100.00
Environmental Fund	\$215,332.41	\$125,000.00	\$507,719.98
Open Space Fund	\$390,000.00	\$410,800.00	\$4,600,000.00
Refuse Fund	\$2,300.00	\$2,300.00	\$172,993.37
Total (All Budgets)	\$8,229,238.60	\$9,569,533.33	\$13,545,083.35

2022 Proposed Budget – Summary of Expenditures

Fund	2021 Budget (Adopted)	2022 Budget (Proposed)	+/- Amount (\$)	+/- (%)
General Fund	\$3,341,819.67	\$3,668,715.15	\$326,895.48	9.78%
Highway Aid Fund	\$264,778.12	\$269,198.18	\$4,420.06	1.67%
Host Retro Agreement Fund	\$1,450,000.00	\$1,973,730.00	\$523,730.00	36.12%
Capital Reserve and Construction Fund	\$2,171,010.90	\$2,592,040.00	\$421,029.10	19.39%
Recreation Fund	\$393,997.50	\$527,750.00	\$133,752.50	33.95%
Environmental Fund	\$112,294.47	\$125,000.00	\$12,705.53	11.31%
Open Space Fund	\$390,000.00	\$410,800.00	\$20,800.00	5.33%
Refuse Fund	\$2,300.00	\$2,300.00	\$0.00	0%
Total (All Budgets)	\$8,126,200.66	\$9,569,533.33	\$1,433,332.67	17.76%

Proposed Capital Reserve Fund expenditures/projects for 2022 were reviewed.

A discussion occurred concerning the replacement of the remaining 2000 GMC Top Kick single axle dump truck. It was identified that the cost of a dump truck (for both the chassis and upfit) has increased exponentially. Stephen Hurni inquired whether the Township would be able to get the truck next year, and Tom Petrucci responded that even if ordered next year, the truck will likely not be received next year. Jane Mellert inquired if the truck order could be delayed another year (to see if the price would go down). Tom Petrucci responded in the affirmative, but also noted that the cost could also go up in price.

Resident Chuck Piazza inquired as to the itemized costs of the truck. Tom Petrucci responded that the estimated cost of the upfit (including body, plow and spreader) was just above \$83,000.00. Only a few years ago, the upfit cost was about \$60,000.00.

It was noted that the Township has done a good job of replacing equipment over the last several years. Fire Chief Alex Cortezzo stated that it is becoming more difficult to get parts for the GMC Top Kick models. Tom Petrucci also stated that this particular Top Kick was previously modified in “interesting” ways, and that the Township should seek to get this truck out of the fleet.

It was decided to leave the \$250,000.00 figure in the proposed budget. Prior to the final expenditure in 2022, the Township Manager will seek approval from the governing body. Tom Petrucci noted that the truck to be replaced is not in good condition.

The Capital Reserve Fund line item for storm sewers/drains in the amount of \$350,000.00 includes \$100,000.00 in grant funding.

The Capital Reserve Fund 438.000 line item (Maintenance of Roads and Bridges) will be increased. The Guide Rail line item will remain at \$10,000.00.

Chuck Piazza inquired about the Capital Reserve Fund license plate reader grant project. Tom Petrucci stated that these readers are for the use of the Slate Belt Regional Police Department, and they are stationary. The readers will link and interface with the Lehigh County database.

Resident Millie Beahn asked about the status of the repairs of Capp Road. Tom Petrucci stated that portions of Capp Road will have base repair conducted, and that the Township has a culvert that needs to be replaced. It was noted that the culvert located at the end of the road (effectively making the road a dead end road) is located in Lower Mount Bethel Township.

Tom Petrucci reported that the Township may consider replacing Capp Road, Glass Street and Engler Road in the near future, and that the GP-11 permit packages could be designed and engineered collectively in order to save costs.

An Engler Road stormwater remediation plan is underway. The conceptual plan will need to be reviewed with the Board of Supervisors and the adjacent residents.

The Recreation Fund includes an amount (\$12,750.00) to provide for both picnic benches at the Municipal Park Pavilion and an increased amount for the pavilion at Community Park (\$450,000.00). The architect meeting will be scheduled in the near future (following the identification of a replacement/alternate drainage field area). Until the drainage field area is set, the location and orientation of the pavilion cannot be determined. The slated replacement drainage area has been identified as the farmland that is owned by the Township and currently farmed by Mr. Henry Achenbach.

Millie Beahn stated that the Community Park Pavilion project should be scaled back to lower cost- citing the fact that there are only about 1,500 children in the Pen Argyl Area School District. Tom Petrucci responded that the intent of the project is for all residents to utilize the facility- not just the school district. He also stated that the Recreation Board has already looked to scale back the commercial kitchen equipment originally proposed for this facility.

The Recreation Fund also includes sufficient funding to resurface a portion of the Recreation Trail and to re-deck one Recreation Trail bridge.

In response to a question from Chuck Piazza, Tom Petrucci stated that \$643,000.00 of host community fees are needed to balance the General Fund. Another \$1,073,000.00 of host community fees are used for capital expenditures. Almost 9 mills of real estate taxes are received by the Township from the landfill.

In response to a question from Mr. Piazza as to how the Township will bridge the funding gap in the future should the landfill close down, Tom Petrucci responded as follows:

- The Township has an accumulated Trust Fund to help offset the loss of revenue.
- The Township operates differently from most municipalities because of the receipt of the host community revenue. The Township could adjust how it purchases equipment in the future. For example, the Township could take on debt service.
- The Township has more commercial/industrial development coming in, and this will help to offset the loss of the landfill revenue.

Jane Mellert noted that the Township has been strategically replacing and upgrading equipment and infrastructure so that the expenditure of funds will not be necessary in the future. The Township would be operating differently without the landfill revenue. Glenn Borger stated that PSATS has always recommended that municipalities should fund their entire operations through tax revenue, but the Township has not followed the recommendation of PSATS concerning this matter.

Chuck Piazza questioned when the Township will begin to start operating differently. Tom Petrucci stated that the Township is operating in a narrow window right now with about seven years of landfill life remaining without an expansion.

Glenn Borger stated that one day the Township will experience an issue with declining revenue at some point- even if it is many years in the future.

Tom Petrucci stated that he is projecting the balance of the Trust Fund to be about \$18,000,000.00 when the landfill closes. There are a number of possible scenarios for the use of the Trust Fund that he has analyzed in the past, and that report is available for review.

Resident Paul Rinaldi Jr. openly postulated whether people's minds would be changed concerning the future of the landfill and rezoning if they were actively aware of the eventual financial impact to the Township. He is wondering if people's minds will change one way or the other. Jane Mellert stated that people should also know that the Township has prepared for the closure of the landfill. The Solid Waste Zoning District was not intended to last forever, and the landfill has actually lasted longer than originally anticipated. It was also identified that accepting additional waste as a result of Hurricane Ida may expedite the closure of the landfill even sooner.

The Board held a discussion on recreational facility fees.

The Budget will be amended to have recreation fees only going to the Recreation Fund- not both the Recreation Fund and the General Fund.

It was identified that the Slate Belt Regional Police Department does not have any officers that are certified to operate the truck scales, so no overweight fines are anticipated to be received. One set of scales has been sold.

The Township will continue not to collect yard sale permit fees, unless there are a number of reported issues. The Township will simply collect the information for those that are holding yard sales, and if there is a problem, the Township will ostensibly know due to complaints.

Tom Petrucci stated that there is currently legislation proposed that would allow municipalities in the Commonwealth to utilize more modern methods to advertise proposed ordinances and the letting of contracts. The Pennsylvania State Association of Township Supervisors (PSATS) has supported this legislation, but it has not moved forward to date.

Jane Mellert had questioned the cost of the 2022 contract with Pibbles and Paws for animal control (dogs). The cost has increased from \$1.00 per capita to \$2.00 per capita. The amount has increased to \$12,526.00- just under 100%. Tom Petrucci noted that there are no alternatives to using this service- identifying the fact that the police department does not want to have to deal with picking up stray dogs and the Township has no active kennels. The cost of the service has increased due to increased staffing costs in order to be “on call” for the majority of the time.

The “cat” portion of the Township’s animal control program was also increased. The Township has utilized the trap/spay/neuter services of No Nonsense Neutering for the last two years. Tom Petrucci reported that the Township has been using the current allocation of fifty (50) vouchers by September and October, so the budget provides for an increased number of vouchers.

Jane Mellert stated that only two (2) dogs were handled by Pibbles Paws for about a period of a year. The regional police department has had success with posting animals on social media. Tom Petrucci stated that this is good, but questioned what happens when a dog is not picked up by their owner. Glenn Borger equated the situation to a police officer or firefighter on call. You are paying for the service for when it actually happens. It was also identified that Pibbles Paws not only picks up the stray dogs- they also care for them once they take ownership of the dogs, as required by the Dog Law. The \$2.00 per capita is being uniformly assessed for all of the municipalities that Pibbles Paws serves. Stephen Hurni reminded the Board that the Council of Governments animal control program was not a successful initiative. Tom Petrucci also stated that this is not an area of concern since Pibbles Paws has taken over, but it was a major problem in the Township in the past. Tom Petrucci will check with Stacey Kellner to ascertain if they are willing to accept a lower amount than the \$2.00 per capita figure.

Jane Mellert recommended that the Township should review the agreements for the Farmer’s Grove and the farm fields at Community Park to ensure that everything is accurate and up-to-date. Glenn Borger reported that someone has planted corn at the back of the Farmer’s Grove property (this was previously hay).

Millie Beahn stated that Ray Mack and Pete Houck had traditionally taken hay off of the land. She had also questioned who is taking these actions, but then it occurred to her that if the Township has someone willing to plant crops and harvest them while working around the schedule of the Fair, the Township should just let them do it. Glenn Borer

stated that the Township should know how its real property is being utilized, and he raised liability concerns. Tom Petrucci will research this matter further and report back to the Board of Supervisors at the next public meeting.

Jane Mellert questioned whether the budget provides for new carpeting and new office furniture for the Township Manager, and Tom Petrucci stated that the General Fund capital purchases line item will need to be increased to account for those items. Tom Petrucci recommended tiled carpeting.

Jane Mellert inquired with the Board members as to whether there is any interest to increase the annual donation to the Blue Mountain Community Library. Tom Petrucci will ask the Blue Mountain Community Library officials if they need additional funds in accordance with their actual budget.

With respect to the Environmental Fund, Tom Petrucci clarified that water quality sampling activities have not continued since 2017. Chuck Piazza stated that the majority of the issues appear to be common sense in nature (for example, cows standing in the stream), and he questioned the need for additional water quality testing. Tom Petrucci stated that agricultural properties must have manure management plans. Any future sampling plan will be narrowed down based on the results of previous water testing results (i.e. targeting known problem areas with the Sewage Enforcement Officer). The next steps of the Little Bushkill Creek Watershed Management Plan should attempt to correct the known problem areas. The overall program should include the remediation of aging septic systems, aging sanitary sewer infrastructure, and educating agricultural operators about best practice farming operations.

A discussion occurred concerning the Refuse Fund. The Refuse Fund will be amended to account for the use of the entire balance of the Refuse Fund, if the Board is inclined. The projected use of the Refuse Fund was not determined during the meeting, and will need to be subsequently discussed and approved by the Board of Supervisors.

Tom Petrucci stated that the Township has accumulated an unassigned General Fund balance over the last several fiscal years. This item also coincides with the request of the Fire Department for the Board of Supervisors to purchase an aerial tower truck.

Fire Chief Alex Cortezzo addressed the Board of Supervisors about the need for an aerial tower truck.

Stephen Hurni stated another Council of Governments in the western part of the state (Capital Area Council of Governments) received \$2,500,000.00 from FEMA to support their fire departments.

Jane Mellert questioned how many fires that have been fought in the past year would have required an on-scene aerial truck. Chief Cortezzo responded that all of the fires required this type of apparatus, but the Township relies on neighboring municipalities for this apparatus. Instead of replacing an engine at this time, this apparatus would serve multiple functions. Jane asked the life of the equipment, and Chief Cortezzo responded that it would be twenty-five (25) years.

The cost of the aerial truck apparatus is about \$1,500,000.00. Chief Cortezzo stated that it is unlikely for the Township to receive a grant for this equipment.

Tom Petrucci reported that the Township has an unassigned General Fund balance of about the same amount, and the Township could commit the funds in the General Fund towards this purchase in accordance with Governmental Accounting Standards Board Statement (GASB) No. 54 for different fund classifications. The hierarchy of fund classification under GASB 54 is Restricted (can only be used for a special purpose by law- ex. Open Space Fund), Committed (set by Resolution of the Board of Supervisors), Assigned (typically handled by the Township Manager) and Unassigned (can be used for any purpose).

Tom Petrucci stated that it was his understanding that the Township would not be expending the funds in 2022 if ordered today. The funds would need to be provided for in the 2023 Budget, but the Township could commit the funds towards this expenditure in the General Fund by way of an adopted resolution. It was noted that the price will increase at the beginning of 2022.

Jane Mellert stated that better firefighting technology does not currently exist in the United States, but it does in other countries.

At a subsequent public meeting, the Board must first adopt a GASB 54 policy and then commit the funds towards the aerial truck by way of an adopted resolution. Then the Township should approve the aerial truck order (the Fire Company should not order the truck without the written approval of the Board of Supervisors).

Jane Mellert is taking this request very seriously, and noted that the Fire Company will never be able to independently raise sufficient funds for this purchase. She is asking the Board members to also take this request very seriously.

Paul Rinaldi Jr. asked if other fire departments charge for the use of their aerial trucks, and the response was that no Northampton County fire departments charge other departments for the sharing of equipment.

This matter will be placed on the November 10th regular Board of Supervisors meeting for the consideration of the governing body (concerning both the GASB 54 policy and the aerial truck commitment resolution).

ACTION: Motion was made by Stephen Hurni and seconded by Joyce Lambert to authorize the Township Manager to revise the 2022 Proposed Plainfield Township Budget and forward the 2022 Proposed Budget to the November 10, 2021 regular Board of Supervisors meeting for the consideration of advertisement by the governing body.

Prior to the vote, Vice-Chairman, Glenn Borger, asked if there were any comments from the governing body or the public.

Motion approved. Vote 4-0.

CITIZEN'S AGENDA/NON-AGENDA:

Millie Beahn, Resident: Millie Beahn reported that the Green Knight Economic Development Corporation was originally formed with the intent to provide for poor and distressed residents of economic need that live in Pen Argyl Borough, Wind Gap Borough and Plainfield Township. She stated that the organization has assets over \$8,000,000.00 on liabilities of about \$5,000,000.00- with net assets of about \$3,000,000.00. She is concerned that the Green Knight Economic Development Corporation was turned into a non-profit land development corporation. She expressed concerns about the money from the operation of the non-profit going towards the Green Knights. She would like to see more money going towards the poor and distressed residents and questioned how that the organization is benefitting the Township. Glenn Borger stressed that the organization is a private entity.

Millie stated that she would never like to see another landfill expansion in the community. She has an issue with keeping the landfill in operation so that residents in Pen Argyl and Wind Gap continue to receive free garbage. She would also like to see more affordable housing in the community.

Millie Beahn also expressed her support for the purchase of an aerial ladder truck for the use of the Plainfield Township Volunteer Fire Company.

Paul Rinaldi, Jr., Resident: Questioned how long a Supervisor term is for, and the response was six (6) years. He also questioned who was running in the general election, and he was told that this information is readily available online.

Jane Mellert stated that residents were told in the past that the landfill would never expand across Pen Argyl Road because the geology of the land was different and not as suited to a landfill.

BOARD OF SUPERVISORS REPORTS:

1. *Randy Heard, Chairman*- Not in attendance.
2. *Glenn Borger, Vice Chairman*- Nothing to report.
3. *Joyce Lambert*- Nothing to report.
4. *Jane Mellert*- Nothing to report.
5. *Stephen Hurni*- Nothing to report.

ADJOURNMENT:

Having no further business to come before the Board of Supervisors, motion was made by Joyce Lambert and seconded by Stephen Hurni to adjourn the meeting.

Motion approved. Vote 4-0.

The meeting adjourned at 9:25 P.M.

Respectfully submitted,

Thomas Petrucci
Township Manager/Secretary
Plainfield Township
Board of Supervisors