

**MINUTES**  
**BUTLER TOWNSHIP BUDGET COMMISSION**  
July 19, 2016

This meeting of the Butler Township Budget Commission was called to order at 6:00 p.m. at the Butler Township Meeting Hall, by Chairman Greg Brush. A meeting agenda was distributed by Erika Vogel.

**ROLL CALL:**

Present were Mark Adams, Erika Vogel, Jack Woods and Ken Betz. Gregory Brush and Sherry Edwards were present via telephone conference. David Mohler resigned from the Board due to work conflicts.

**APPROVAL OF MINUTES OF JUNE 22, 2016:**

Ken Betz made a motion to approve the meeting minutes of June 22, 2016, Mark Adams seconded the motion. All in favor voted yes and the motion passed unanimously.

**APPROVAL OF MINUTES OF JULY 13, 2016:**

Sherry Edwards made a motion to approve the meeting minutes of July 13, 2016, Erika Vogel seconded the motion. All in favor voted yes and the motion passed unanimously.

**POLICE LEVY REVIEW & RECOMMENDATION**

Greg Brush gave the public in attendance an overview of what the budget commission has been discussing and the reason for calling the special meeting. Essentially, if the commission was going to make a recommendation to the Trustee's for a Police Levy, it was imperative that it was done prior to the next meeting of the Trustees on July 25, 2016.

Greg Brush asked Erika Vogel to go over the spreadsheets provided to the board. The spreadsheets show budget projections in the Police Fund from 2016 – 2020. From 2017 on, it was discussed that it is critical to eliminate the transfer from the general fund to the police fund. There has also been discussion that it would be ideal not to have all of the JED-Z funds going to the police department, because there are other resources that are utilized within the JED-Z district and other departments should see some of that income as well. The spreadsheet indicates 50% of the projected revenue from the JED-Z going to PD and the remainder is not included in the projections. The Commission has also indicated that it would be nice to use those funds to pay down some of the Township's debt which is also associated with the district. Another member of the commission suggested that we devote a guaranteed amount (\$400,000) to the police department and then other departments could receive the rest of the funds.

We have received estimations from the Auditor's Office for each millage amount and what we would bring in. It shows that \$3.5 Mill would bring in approximately \$750,000 in revenue, which is what was used to balance the budget in the second spreadsheet. At the bottom of the millage chart, it also gives an example for renewing vs. replacing the current 4.9 mill police levy. Replacing would bring in only an additional \$10K, but raises taxes 14% on homeowners, as they

would lose rollbacks on the entire levy. Greg Brush noted that is an important factor to note and noted that they would not recommend renewing the current levy.

Jack Woods asked why the budget was \$300,000 higher in 2016 than the actual numbers in 2015. Erika Vogel said that there was an increase in personnel costs in 2016. Ken Betz asked if staffing would remain the same in the proposal. Erika Vogel indicated that the proposals are based on current personnel. Ken Betz said that we are \$400,000 in the whole per year and we need to do something to close that gap.

Greg Brush indicated that he looks at the budget and essentially sees a one-million dollar deficit. This deficit is currently covered by transfers from the General Fund and the JED-Z. The General Fund is no longer capable of transferring those funds and a portion of the income from the JED-Z could be utilized in other areas.

Sherry Edwards stated that in reviewing the township's budget it is clear that the township is not spending frivolously and there are no plans to do that. Historic trends dictate that the levy is needed. There has been a lot of discussion from the public about wanting to maintain the current police service, provided through the township. If it is the service residents want they will have to belly up and pass a levy.

Jack Woods asked, if the commission waited until they had completed the thorough budget review, when would be the next attempt at a levy. It was determined that if we didn't look at a levy now, we would not receive funds until 2018.

Mark Adams stated that if we put off the levy that puts us that much further behind. He noted that we really need to begin building some type of reserve, because it is still unclear if we will see additional cuts from the local government fund.

Greg Brush said he would recommend that if the citizens do not make the decision to pass the levy, immediate cuts would need to be made. Jack Woods noted that we have also discussed that the department currently may be short staffed and asked if that is unsafe for the officers. It was indicated that ideally, we would have more officers. Greg Brush noted that we are facing a serious deficit and right now the officers have no guarantee for their jobs, aside from the Sheriff's office decision, the township would have to look at layoffs if a levy is not passed.

Sherry Edwards noted that we cannot wait another year to see revenue from an additional levy, however it was noted that we could look at the option of changing our recommendation if that is needed as we move forward.

Ken Betz noted that he is comfortable with the proposal for a 3.5 mill levy and where that would put the township financially over the next several years. He added that folks have been very vocal about what they want and have indicated that they want to support their police.

There was discussion regarding the sheriff contract and the ability to contract. Erika Vogel explained that the current levy language does not allow for contracting of services. It was noted

that the same language would be recommended for a future levy, so that the funds go toward the Butler Township Police Department and not contracting.

Jack Woods noted that the commission could look at a five year levy instead of a permanent levy. Greg Brush said that is an option however the uncertainty of a temporary levee could be a budgeting issue in the future. He is not against temporary levees, it is just hard to project future revenue. Greg Brush indicated that 3.5 mills is the minimum that should be considered, but he does not think that the public would support anything higher.

Greg Brush asked if the commission members had any other questions or comments. There were none.

Ken Betz made a motion to request that the trustees place a 3.5 mill additional tax levy on the ballot for police services and that the trustees determine whether or not it is permanent or temporary. It was also noted that the language would be the same as the current levy so that it does not permit the contracting of services. Sherry Edwards seconded the motion. A roll call vote was called: Adams, Yes; Betz, Yes; Brush, Yes; Edwards, Yes; Vogel, Yes; Woods, No. The motion passed 5-1.

It was noted that it will be the residents that decide whether or not to approve the levy on November 8, 2016.

Sherry Edwards asked if Greg Brush could report to the Trustee's the recommendation of the commission and explain the recommendation to the Board. Greg agreed but asked for the other commission members to be present as well.

**DISCUSSION OF THE PUBLIC:**

Jeanne Holihan asked how much the levy would cost a resident. It is estimated that a 3.5 mill levy will cost \$122.50 per \$100,000 valuation.

Terry Crawford asked what the residents guarantee was that the funds will not be used for the sheriff's office. That guarantee is based in the ballot language that was discussed. The current language does not allow it and the language will be proposed to stay the same.

Leo Holihan explained that there is some level of distrust and asked that it is as clear as possible to residents that the levy will not be used for the Sheriff's office. He also noted that residents should be aware of what will be cut if it doesn't pass. He asked if 3.5 Mill is enough because it is not getting any safer out there. He asked that the trustees be very specific.

Mark Adams explained that the Township is somewhat limited in the manners in which they can distribute information. He asked that the residents get the info out as much as possible to support the levy.

Brad Hawley commented on the 2 failed police levies and explained that the Township did not want to vote for the levies previously because they felt the police were spending all their time on

Miller Lane. It was noted that that issue has been addressed by the JED-Z. Mr. Hawley noted that the JED-Z will not pass if the Sheriff's office takes over.

Darrell Wacker asked if the commission could explain why the Police would not potentially receive all of the JED-Z funds. Erika Vogel explained that originally, the JED-Z was supposed to support the township as a whole, however, as the funding has only amounted to \$300,000 - \$400,000 the last two years, all of the funds have been guaranteed to the police. It would be nice, as that revenue stream hopefully increases, to be able to utilize the funds to help other departments that serve the district as well. Jack Woods indicated that the first \$400,000 at least should support the Police Department. Greg Brush said that there was only a 1% income tax passed for the district because there was a fear it would not pass. If it was 2% we would be closer to where we need to be in terms of revenue and it would be distributed differently.

John Ellis asked that the ballot language is clear and asked who would be reviewing it. Erika Vogel stated that staff would provide the language to the Board of Elections based on the resolution which will be available for review as well.

Leo Holihan asked if he could have access to the spreadsheets distributed. Erika Vogel said that she could provide them to anyone interested and asked for Mr. Holihan's email address. Leo Holihan said he appreciates the constructive way that the commission works.

Jeanne Holihan said that she would like to thank the commission for all of their work. She said that she really appreciates it.


**NEXT MEETING:**

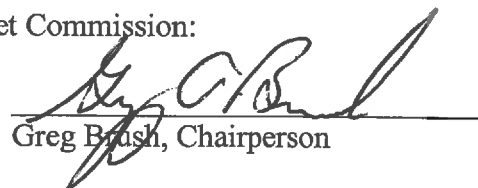
The members noted that they would have a full day workshop to review the budget. The date will be Friday, August 5, 2016 from 8 a.m. to 4:00 p.m. Aside from that, the commission meets on the second and fourth Wednesday of every month.

**ADJOURNMENT:**

There being no further business, Erika Vogel made a motion to adjourn the meeting at 7:07 p.m.

**ATTEST, ON BEHALF OF the Butler Township Budget Commission:**

  
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Sherry Edwards, Secretary

  
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Greg Brush, Chairperson

These minutes approved: August 5, 2016