

**COLLEGE TOWNSHIP COUNCIL
PUBLIC HEARING-4 ON
2013 COLLEGE TOWNSHIP BUDGET**

Thursday, December 20, 2012

ATTENDED BY:

COUNCIL:

David P. Fryer, Chair
Daniel D. Klees, Vice-Chair
Forrest J. Remick, Ph.D.
David W. Koll
Mary C. Shoemaker

STAFF:

Adam Brumbaugh, Township Manager
Kent Baker, Township Engineer
Robert T. Long, Jr., Finance Director
John J. Franek, Jr., Zoning Officer
Mark Holdren, CRPA Sr. Planner
Mary E. Wilson, Asst. Township Secretary

CALL TO ORDER

Vice-Chair Klees called to order the December 20, 2012, Public Hearing-4 on the 2013 College Township Budget, at 7:13 PM.

Mr. Adam Brumbaugh, Township Manager, made a presentation on the proposed 2013 College Township Budget and reported that a .05% increase in property tax millage was necessary, mainly due to increased debt obligations and increased costs of police and fire services and public safety. These three latter elements equate to 30.6% of the anticipated 2013 College Township Budget with the property tax increase adding an average of \$38.00 to property owners' tax bills. Police services costs increased over \$68,000 for 2013, and the Centre Region Council of Governments' (CRCOG) costs for planning went up \$18,000. CRCOG parks maintenance costs for College Township in 2013 are increasing by \$21,000. The .05% increase in the property tax rate will provide \$206,000 in additional revenue for College Township in 2013. The last tax increase in the Township was three years ago, in 2010.

Mr. P. Vernon, 858 Walnut Spring Lane, State College, expressed concern with the tax increase, stating that such increases affect those on fixed incomes. Mr. Vernon asked if budgeted traffic-calming projects could be delayed one year and noted that the CRCOG's 7.5% increase was a driver on much of this tax increase. Mr. Vernon asked if public works tasks, such as landscaping work, could be outsourced so that the Township would not be burdened with benefits and pensions and suggested that regional planning might benefit financially by moving to the County's planning office. Mr. Vernon opposed the expansion of

Oak Hall Regional Park from three to four playing fields and the addition of seven Centre Region Park and Recreation staff members, suggesting the money should be directed toward the building of a new high school.

Mr. Carl Maehr, 150 Boalsburg Road, Lemont, supported Mr. Vernon's comments and felt he was not being represented by the elected officials when he expressed an objection to the expansion of the Oak Hall Regional Park plans. Mr. Maehr felt that too much money was being spent.

Vice-Chair Klees defended the CRCOG's objective of securing playing fields for the Centre Region. He added that most communities of similar size would have done this 25 or 30 years ago for the area's youth and adults to have a place to play, as school grounds are no longer available. Vice-Chair Klees stated that, even after this tax increase, College Township has either the lowest or next to the lowest property tax in the Centre Region.

Mr. Robert Long, Jr., Finance Director, noted that, thanks to the services of volunteer fire fighters, costs are lower than if the Township had to budget for paid fire services. It would be a different budget were fire services required to be included.

Mr. Joe Westrick, 1320 Boalsburg Road, Oak Hall, supported the two prior public speakers and objected to the expanded Oak Hall Regional Park's lighting, noise, traffic, and visitors consumption of alcohol. Mr. Westrick asked Council to take another look at the budget increase, as people are struggling. In closing, Mr. Westrick recommended that the Township purchase an old police cruiser and park it in the Village of Oak Hall as a way to slow down traffic.

Mr. Fryer, 2012 Council Chair, expressed frustration at being verbally assaulted in public meetings and advised that, after four terms in office, he would not be running for re-election. The public was encouraged to consider taking on the difficult task of representing College Township and receiving difficult phone calls from the public, such as he did in 2000 concerning a death on First Avenue. Regarding additional police coverage in the Village of Oak Hall, Mr. Fryer advised that the Township Manager can direct additional coverage.

Mr. Rodney Hendrickson, 186 Mitchell Farm Lane, stated that College Township had the best staff in Centre County and added that the Township may be better waiting one year before pursuing a tax increase.

Mr. Vernon questioned why the Township does not go to referendum on tax increases, expressed concern about the Oak Hall Regional Park expansion plans, suggested the Township hold off on the park plans until federal impacts become known and find a way to save a few dollars.

PUBLIC COMMENT:

Hearing no further public comment, Council moved to close the public hearing.

**Dr. Remick moved to close Public Hearing-4 on the 2013
College Township Budget.
Ms. Shoemaker seconded the motion.
Motion carried unanimously.**

Vice-Chair Klees closed Public Hearing-4 on the 2013 College Township Budget at 7:54 PM.

Respectfully submitted,

Adam T. Brumbaugh

Adam T. Brumbaugh
Township Manager/Secretary