

FINAL

**FRANKLIN TOWNSHIP
BOARD OF SUPERVISORS (BOS)
WORKSHOP & 2023 BUDGET MEETING MINUTES
March 13, 2023, 6:00 PM**

Call to Order

**Roll Call: (x) Wenrich (x) Buckwash (x) Decker (x) Anthony (x) Cummings
(x) Williams**

An Executive Session was held from 6:06 through 6:18 PM Chairman Mark Wenrich called the meeting to order at 6:22 PM

The Park Rules document presented by Parks/Recreation Chair Terry Hoffman at the March 8, 2023, BOS meeting was reviewed. There was a question on whether this list of rules was the most current signage which had already been printed or if this was a new/different list. Chairman Wenrich asked Treasurer Pam Williams to verify with Roadmaster Andy Gibb and report back to the BOS.

A motion was made by Supervisor Kevin Cummings to table the approval of the Park Rules until the April 12, 2023, BOS meeting.

Second by Chairman Mark Wenrich

Discussion by Vice-Chairman David Buckwash who said he thought this was just given to them to verify the wording.

The motion passed.

The document/contract from Dawood was reviewed.

A motion was made by Chairman Wenrich to solicit Dawood to assist with the RAC-P grant process and assistance with various grants the township can apply for.

Second by Supervisor Duane Anthony

Discussion by Supervisor Cummings on if the township has the option to terminate the contract if they choose to. Treasurer Williams read the section of the contract regarding termination.

The motion passed.

A motion was made by Chairman Wenrich to appoint Calvin Hipp to the Dillsburg Area Authority (DAA) as the Franklin Township representative with the stipulation that he must attend the monthly meetings in person and report to the BOS.

Second by Supervisor Kevin Cummings

Discussion by Supervisor Naomi Decker stating she was opposing the appointment due to the situation with the DAA board. She stated she is not opposed to the individual personally.

The motion passed.

Supervisor Decker opposed.

PUBLIC COMMENT

Resident Fred DeLuca discussed with the BOS a letter he submitted for review and to gain support from the BOS. The letter is a proposal for a letter writing campaign to our representatives. The goal is to get more funding for the fire company, and he said he would take the lead on it.

Chairman Wenrich stated he would not support this as the BOS did not direct him to do this and the letter appeared to the BOS to be endorsed by Franklin Township and the Supervisors. Mr. DeLuca said he never indicated he was acting on behalf of the township and that he is trying to find new revenue sources. Vice-Chair David Buckwash informed Mr. Deluca he could do it on his own as a resident but not representing the township. Supervisor Cummings commended Mr. DeLuca to the attempt and to offer to do it but agreed that it is not a directive from the Supervisors as they don't want to "muddy the waters".

Supervisor Cummings asked for clarification on an email regarding Rob Brady's consulting firm and asked the fire company representatives if he ever entered into, signed and or voted in favor of or to be on a fire company commission. The fire company representatives confirmed Supervisor Cummings did not.

Resident Paula Kostick, 195 Locust Grove Road spoke in favor of a fire tax or millage increase to pay for fire services. She gave examples of what she pays in other municipalities on various properties she owns.

Vice-Chair Dave Buckwash stated we are at a "fork in the road" on whether to adopt a fire tax or a millage increase to pay for fire services. NYCFR Chief Hector Morales spoke and introduced the fire personnel that were in attendance. He gave an example of the time involved in a fire from the previous evening.

NYCFR Assistant Chief Carla Snyder spoke first thanking the community for support. She presented information on the costs of operating a fire company, i.e., insurance, utilities, fuel, etc. as well as fire apparatus replacement costs. NYCFR ordered a new piece of equipment to replace a 1998 model which costs approximately \$850,000. Carla explained the training required for personnel in HAZMAT, AED, heavy rescue, etc., the number of training hours and that they have to train for any situation, particularly with servicing Rt. 15. In 2022, NYCFR hired nine highly experienced firefighters to cover the service area during daytime hours due to the shortage of volunteers. She listed the expenses to run two stations and stated fundraising mostly nets little profit.

Chairman Mark Wenrich stated he thought Carrol Township and Dillsburg Borough were using the .059 rate either as a fire tax or a millage increase going towards paying for fire service. He stated his opinion is that the fairest way is for all of the municipalities to use the same rate and apply it to assessed value.

Supervisor Kevin Cummings gave some history on his experience working in fire protection systems and services and some of the problems that can result from not completing maintenance and not being proactive. He stated he doesn't want to see anything happen to any of our fire protection personnel.

His opinion is also that every municipality that NYCFR serves should pay the same rate on their assessed value. He felt a fire tax is the route to go, that all monies should go directly to the fire company and that Franklin Township should adopt the same Resolution that Carroll Township adopted instead of a millage increase where funds could be used for any purpose.

Chairman Wenrich asked Vice-Chair Dave Buckwash if he had the totals of all of the assessed values with applying the .059 rate. Vice-Chair Buckwash stated for Franklin Township, the amount is \$178,760.60; for Carroll Township, \$335,616.29 and for Dillsburg Borough, \$86,214.36 for a total of \$600,591.25. This didn't include any calculations for Washington Township. Chairman Wenrich stated it amounts to \$147.50 per year on a \$250,000 property. Vice-Chair Buckwash said tax for Franklin Township was set at .20 mills in 2008 and in 2011, it was raised to .60. For Franklin Township, raising it .059 would raise the total tax to 1.19.

Supervisor Decker said her opinion was that as Supervisors, they have to be responsible for the money they tax residents on and also the handling of it. She stated she is not in favor of a fire tax, but a .059 millage increase to raise funds for the fire company. Supervisor Decker said that a fire tax will remove the township responsibility for the funds and that the responsibility is ours to do.

Supervisor Decker asked Keith about the payment of \$43,257 on the pumper; he stated that is an annual payment. She asked about NYCFR proposing to hire four full-time firefighters at \$48,000 per year with \$25,000 in benefits in 2024 and how it transitioned from the current part-time crew to the hire of the four full-time personnel proposed. She asked how those monies have been figured into costs and Keith said these are proposed considerations and not definite. Discussion ensued. Chief Morales said since he took over as chief, the NYCFR has been transparent in how the money is spent.

Supervisor Anthony asked if \$178,760 is going to be enough money. Discussion ensued on inflation of costs and annual budgeting in the future. Supervisor Cummings said we shouldn't micromanage the expenses of the fire company and that we don't have these conversations with the NYCRP. Discussion ensued.

Vice-Chair Buckwash summarized there are two choices, a .059 mil fire tax, or a .059 millage increase. If it's a millage increase, the .059 rate can be put in the ordinance or resolution that that amount goes to the fire company. Raising the millage gives the township an added layer of protection in case there are people involved in the future that aren't as transparent in accountability of the funds. Supervisor Anthony stated checks and balances are always good. Supervisor Cummings said we are responsible for providing that service and the fire company is accountable by law. Discussion was held on how it will show on the tax bill and if it's a millage increase, the method of communicating to our residents what it's for.

A motion was made by Vice-Chairman Buckwash to increase the real estate tax by .59 mills with the funds dedicated solely for the use of the fire company either by ordinance or resolution, whichever is required, effective in 2024.

Second by Supervisor Duane Anthony

Discussion was held to confirm if the motion is a millage increase and it was confirmed it was.

Supervisor Decker said it will be secured for the fire company and uphold the responsibilities of the township. Supervisor Cummings asked the supervisors in favor of this motion if they are in favor of a commission and a municipal agreement. Discussion ensued on accountability and spending. Supervisor Decker suggested a communication could be placed in the tax bill. Keith stated with the numbers presented this evening, there will be a \$40,000 shortfall in 2024.

Chairman Wenrich and Supervisor Cummings **opposed the motion.**

The motion passed.

Treasurer Williams clarified that the letter confirming appointment of DAA Representative Hipp should include the stipulation for attendance at the BOS meetings.

A motion was made by Supervisor Cummings to adjourn at 7:40 PM

Second by Chairman Wenrich.

Discussion-None

Motion Passed

Pamela Williams

Treasurer/Asst. Secretary