Jim Thorpe Borough Council
November 6, 2024
Budget Work Session Meeting

Meeting called to order at 6:34 p.m. by President Gregory Strubinger with the pledge of allegiance and moment of silence for the armed forces, first responders and their families.

Roll Call of Members

Police Chief Schatz	Mayor Cinicola-absent	Mike Yeastedt
Borough Manager Sterner	Connor Rodgers-absent	Ted LaRizzio
Borough Secretary Klotz	Tom Chapman-absent	Sydney Wernett
Solicitor Nanovic-absent	Joanne Klitsch-absent	Greg Strubinger

Public Comment
None

Proposed 2025 Budget
General Fund – Based on what was requested to be included in with the budget, what was presented to Borough Council would be a 4.37 mill increase. Mike Yeastedt asked if there was any way to bring in additional tax revenue. Manager Sterner explained other than raising taxes, she wasn't sure what he meant. Mike Yeastedt said he was referring to occupational taxes. Ted LaRizzio asked how much money does the Borough get when the tourists come into the Borough. Manager Sterner explained none, other than the Hotel Tax and Amusement Tax. Mike Yeastedt said there is a little more to it than that; the money the tourists bring in go to the businesses, the money the businesses receive come back in their property taxes, occupational taxes, etc. Greg Strubinger explained the Borough has tried looking into other ways to tax tourism unsuccessfully.

Greg Strubinger asked about the First Quarter being shown as a deficit on the cover page. Manager Sterner explained this is the amount needed to pay the bills in the First Quarter of 2025. Additional funds don't start coming in until April and this is the amount needed to be carried over from the excess funds in the General Fund.

Borough Council then started reviewing the budget line by line. Mike Yeastedt said under line 400.216 Other Supplies, refacing D&L signs should be removed because JTTA would be applying for additional grant funding for the remaining signs. He asked if money was budgeted for tree trimming in the area where the new Public Works Garage is going. Manager Sterner said Street Supervisor Schoch has already expressed his concerns about the trees. Mike Yeastedt asked if 400.310 Professional Services could be reduced. Manager Sterner explained Grant Writing & Incidentals can get cut back to $4,000.00 from $8,000.00. Manager Sterner said 409.245 Supplies – Asa Packer Mansion can be reduced from $6,000.00 to $2,000.00 due to the Mansion Fund taking care of most of the Mansion's own expenses. Mike Yeastedt questioned 409.307 Permits & Inspections. He asked if the amount budgeted was all for additional testing. Manager Sterner explained 409.350 Insurance includes the Asa Packer Mansion. She said the amount for the Mansion can be removed. She and Secretary Klotz will review the Mansion Budget to double check the insurance was budgeted for correctly. Mike Yeastedt asked about 409.373 Maintenance & Repairs; do the funds need to be kept in this line for the Asa Packer Mansion. Manager Sterner explained current operating expenses wouldn't be able to cover an expense this large. Secretary Klotz said she had hoped these funds would be used to repair the water damage to the third floor, so that it could once again be opened to the public for extended tours. Manager Sterner explained the increase in 409.450 Contracted

Services is for installing an exit door in the current Borough office on the Administrative side for when new tenants move into that building. She explained 411.231 Ambulance gas/oil/fall services was increased on top of the additional contribution. Mike Yeastedt explained some of the needs of the fire department. 411.740 Tools & Appliances – New Oxygen Hydrostatic Tanks are needed. A new tank is good for 10 years. The new tanks would not need to be inspected until 2033 and then every 5 years after that. Manager Sterner explained there was a mistake under 415.374 Vehicle Maintenance. There will only be four vehicle inspections completed at All Points, not six. Mike Yeastedt asked if the Borough is putting away $12,000.00 under 415.742 Major Equipment/Radio Upgrades for when the fire department has to switch to digital radios. Manager Sterner explained that is under a different line, 492.031 General Capital Reserve Fund. Chief Schatz said the Fire Department should look into the Motorola Grant to help offset some of the costs for the digital radios. Manager Sterner explained there was an error under 430.313 Highways Engineer. North Avenue is listed when it should actually be South Avenue. She explained 432.000 Winter Maintenance-Snow removal has been moved into the Liquid Fuels Fund. Under 452.247 Park Supplies & Parts, it's only includes getting half of the picnic tables needed. Greg Strubinger asked what the Kemmerer Park Stormwater was under 454.450 Contracted services. Manager Sterner and Mike Yeastedt explained it is the access road leading into Kemmerer Park from the County parking lot. Greg Strubinger suggested asking the Kemmerer family to help with the funds needed to complete the project. He explained the family has helped with items in the past. The Borough has been exceeding the maintenance agreement with Kemmerer Park. Greg Strubinger then questioned how much the Borough owes yet under 471.100 MEM Street Light Loan #60054. Manager Sterner explained the loan obligation is through 2028. Manager Sterner explained 492.040 Transfer to Capital Projects Fund is moving being saved for future projects.

Liquid Fuels Fund – Manager Sterner explained there is $150,000.00 budgeted for annual paving. There is an additional $25,000.00 budgeted for additional projects. The roads listed are what has been suggested by the Streets Supervisor and the Public Service committee, along with resident requests. Greg Strubinger asked why Center Street is not on the list for repaving. He explained that it is overdue, especially in the business district. Manager Sterner explained this was just a list of what was recommended, and based on what has been budgeted, many of the roads won't get completed this year. School Alley and Cherry Avenue will need to come out of the Liquid Fuels Budget as they are not Liquid Fuels roads. Mike Yeastedt explained the Borough is working with UGI to help take care of the stormwater issue on Race Street.

Sanitation Fund – 427.750 Major Purchase is a new line item added. Included with this are the cameras for Flagstaff Mountain, as requested by Connor Rodgers and Greg Strubinger. Chief Schatz explained these cameras will be able to take pictures of the vehicle's license plate and the contents inside the vehicle. Manager Sterner explained 430.231 Gas/Oil/Tires is incorrect. It's missing the totals for gas and oil. It will be corrected for the next budget meeting. 430.740 Major Equipment is another new line item added. The Streets Department requested a snow clearing attachment for the large mower to help clear off the bridge better and easier. Currently the guys must shovel the snow from the bridge, which eats up a lot of their time that could be better focused on plowing. Greg Strubinger asked if the attachment has been measured properly. He explained the Borough shouldn't be purchasing something it ultimately can't use. A new small mower has also been budgeted for. 430.741 Equipment Rental is a new line item. The Flail Mower will be used for brush cutting twice a year. 436.371 Storm Drains and 436.450 Storm System Contracted Services has been significantly increased due to the various projects identified needing to be completed. Manager Sterner did warn that the Streets Department has limited staff. Vacations, personal time, and sick time need to be taken into consideration, as

well as currently be short a man. She explained Borough Council should only budget for what can be realistically done in a year.

Sewer Fund – Manager Sterner explained on the cover page, it shows Borough Council has two different options to choose from. Option One has everything that was requested to be included, but would increase billing by 13.15%. Option Two has a reduction in the expenses, but would increase billing by 4.95%. Manager Sterner explained that Annual Pension Allocations under 392.100 Transfers In, should not be included. Under 492.038 Sewer Capital Reserve Fund, Manager Sterner explained Council should budget to replace the computers helping to run the Waste Water Treatment Plant every few years. Even though the Plant was reconstructed and has all new equipment, the equipment is not lasting as long as it used to. Included in with Option One under 427.212 IT Support/Contract is one Control Panel Replacement. The Plant has two control panels. One had to be replaced last year. The second was budgeted to be replace in 2024, but ended up not having to replace it. Option Two does not have funds budgeted to replace the Control Panel. Under 427.316 Sludge Removal, Option One includes multiple liquid sludge removals in 2025. Option Two includes a reduction in the amount of liquid sludge removal. Manager Sterner explained the Plant has the ability to remove most of the liquid sludge on its own and this would be an added expense not really needed. Mike Yeastedt asked about the GIS Mapping for Sewer. Manager Sterner said it was forgotten about and would be included in the next draft.

Water Fund – As presented, there would be an increase of 5% to the billing. Under 448.313 Engineering Fees, it includes money for Phase II of the Lead & Copper Compliance. Under 448.703 New Equipment, it includes the installation of the purchased equipment with the CBDG grant funds. The grant funds are not included in on the income side of the budget due to being reimbursed after the equipment purchase and installation. 492.100 Capital Reserve Fund includes $34,484.00 matching funds for the LSA Statewide grant that was recently applied for.

Asa Packer Mansion – Secretary Klotz explained it was hard to make a budget based on having about three months worth of billing and data that the Borough was responsible for. Included in the budget are funds for starting up a Souvenir and Gift Shop and projected sales income. Also included, is a full-time lead guide position, that would share some of the payroll with the General Fund due to having other duties when the Mansion is closed for the season.

Adjourn

MOTION by Mike Yeastedt, second by Sydney Wernett to **adjourn the meeting.** There were no comments. Motion carries 4-0. The meeting ended at 9:20 p.m.

Respectfully Submitted,

Brooke Klotz
Borough Secretary