

BUCKINGHAM TOWNSHIP

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BUCKINGHAM TOWNSHIP Board of Supervisors Work Session Agenda July 26, 2023

5:30 p.m. Executive Session

6:30 p.m. Midway VFC, Lee Forsythe

Manager's Items

Buckingham Township Board of Supervisors
Work Session
Minutes

The work session of the Buckingham Township Board of Supervisors was held July 26, 2023 in the Township Building, 4613 Hughesian Drive, Buckingham, Pennsylvania.

Present:	Paul Calderaio	Chairman
	Jon Forest	Vice-Chairman
	Maggie Rash	Member
	Dana S. Cozza	Township Manager
	Daniel Gray	Township Engineer
	Craig A. Smith, Esquire	Township Solicitor
Not Present:	Luke Rosanova	Bucks County Planning Commission
	Gary Weaver	Township Water/Wastewater Consultant

5:30 p.m. The Board of Supervisors met for an Executive Session to discuss Police personnel matters and the ongoing Froehlich litigation.

The work session began at 6:00 p.m.

Fire Company Meeting – Midway, Lingohocken and Doylestown

The Presidents and Chiefs for Midway, Lingohocken and Doylestown Fire Companies were present to discuss financing objectives with the Board of Supervisors.

Mr. Killfeather, President of Lingohocken Fire Company, said they were present as a unified voice to request consideration to increase the funding levels, as they have been at the same amount since 2001. He explained there has been a substantial increase of inflation and interest rates, and all three fire companies have annual budgets which are audited, and kept as low as they can. Mr. Killfeather said the cost of keeping maintenance up on the trucks with specialized technology and labor hours has gone through the roof. He said Doylestown bought the last truck in 2019 for \$750,000 and a new replacement truck for Lingohocken this year will cost \$1.2 million, with no delivery for 48 months.

Mr. Killfeather said the fire companies have four core expenses – fuel, equipment, insurance, building & occupancy. He said the fire tax in Buckingham has been static at 3/4 mill, same as Wrightstown Township, and they are requesting a 2 to 3 mill increase. He said this increase would help reduce volunteer hours and time currently spent fundraising.

Mrs. Rash asked how is the volunteer level, and Mr. Killfeather said in Lingohocken, with two stations, the level of volunteerism is the highest it has been in 12-15 years. He said they have a good core of volunteerism but they also have a lower call volume than other stations. Chief Stahl, Midway Volunteer Fire Company, said they started a cadet program 2-3 years ago, and take 15-16 year olds who graduate that program and move

them into a junior program. He said they are changing their bylaws and are looking at having volunteers who just want to help with fundraising, or do exterior firefighting. He explained that most of their calls are alarms.

Mr. Kruder, President of Doylestown Fire Company, said manpower fluctuates. He said the number of volunteers is down 70% since 1990 and they have adapted to doing things differently, with guys doing 2-3 jobs on a truck. He said the cost of apparatus is another task for the volunteer members as time is needed for funding, raising money. He explained if they cannot keep up with technology it will affect resident's insurance rates. He said the average homeowner could see an increase between \$86-\$126 per year. Mr. Kruder requested the millage be increased up to the 3 mills voted on by referendum many years ago.

Mr. Calderaio asked what is the typical age they can keep a truck before the technology rating gets dinged, and Mr. Killfeather said the rating isn't contingent on the age of apparatus, but rather the ability to move water and have mutual aid bring water to them. He said Doylestown Township has a substantial number of hydrants, so that helps them.

Mr. Killfeather said the average home pays \$196 currently, and with a 3 mill increase they would pay approximately an increase of \$110.63. He said that does not include open space or ambulance (EMS) taxes.

Mr. Forsythe, President of Midway Volunteer Fire Company, said the voter referendum in 1986 approved a 3 mill fire tax, and they did get that at one time, however it was reassessed and lowered to $\frac{3}{4}$ of a mil because the amount of money coming in was the same. He said quite a few townships went the same way.

Mrs. Rash said as President of the Bucks County Association of Township Officials, she would discuss this matter with the other officials since their townships must be going through the same thing.

Mrs. Rash suggested the township help educate our constituency regarding the need to volunteer. Mrs. Cozza said the upcoming newsletter could have an article and Mr. Killfeather volunteered to write the article. Chief Stahl said they send out a fundraiser mailer just before they take Santa around in the firetruck.

Mrs. Rash asked if they can do something about all of the alarm calls, and Chief James, Lingohocken Fire Company, said 90% of the time the homeowner doesn't know why the alarm sounded. He said that usually the Chief will respond to the call and based on the way it is dispatched, decide to send the trucks out or not. Chief Stahl said they try to keep the trucks back to save on fuel.

Mrs. Rash said she thought they were trying to get volunteer training hours lowered, and Chief Stahl said phase 1 of training, the state level course of Firefighter 1, is 219 hours – a month straight. He said it was 40 hours many years ago when he went through the course. Mr. Killfeather said they can go to the training at night and one day a weekend

for six months.

The Board thanked everyone for coming out this evening and said they would look into the request for an increase.

7:20 p.m. The Work Session adjourned.

Approved by the Board of Supervisors on the 23rd day of August, 2023.

Buckingham Township Board of Supervisors

Paul Calderaio, Chairman

Maggie Rash, Vice-Chairman

Jon Forest, Member

Attest:

Dana S. Cozza, Township Secretary

Minutes respectfully submitted by Lori Wicen.