



EAST BRADFORD TOWNSHIP

CHESTER COUNTY, PENNSYLVANIA

Dear Residents and the Board of Supervisors of East Bradford Township:

We are pleased to present the East Bradford Township 2020 Proposed Budget. The paragraphs that follow highlight a few important areas of the budget document:

- **The draft 2020 Budget proposes to increase the property tax from the existing rate of 1.00 mills to 1.50 mills.** 2020 will begin to address both recent budget deficit years and challenging forecasts for the next years ahead. By way of illustration, residents with a property worth \$500,000, typically assessed at one-half market rate, or \$250,000, currently pay \$250 in property taxes under the 1.00 mill rate. In 2020, the same property owner would pay \$375 with the proposed 1.50 mill rate. The increase is necessary for the Township to undertake proactive steps to address both revenue shortfalls and increased expenditure needs to continue to provide the quality of service that is expected by residents. The proposed budget for 2020 is balanced and requires no transfer from General Fund equity (e.g. savings).
- **Organizational transitions in the areas of planning, zoning, codes, and building permit processing are included in the proposed budget.** The proposed budget reflects changing needs of the Township administration and operations with two positional changes. First, we are returning to a full-time building codes official in response to a steady increase in development and building activity. This person will also handle codes enforcement and fire marshal tasks. We are also creating a new position – Director of Planning and Zoning – to handle zoning and land development, as well as legislation and planning.
- **Unanticipated legal expenses during 2019, which resulted in higher than budgeted expenses, are expected to continue into 2020.** Considerable time and resources have been needed to process land use appeals and defend Township policies to protect public safety and welfare.
- **The proposed budget reflects the continued commitment to public safety.** In particular, the Police Agreement with West Chester Borough was renewed for 2020. The West Chester Borough Police Department continues to provide excellent local police service and value to Township. The first year increase of 13 percent is the result of increased police costs that occurred during the prior five years. Annual increases in the remaining years of the contract are in the range of 3 to 4 percent. The 2020 Budget also includes increased funding for Good Fellowship Ambulance, which provides all basic and advanced lifesaving services to the Township.
- **This proposed budget reflects a continued commitment to open space stewardship, parks and trails improvements, and recreational programing.** The Plum Run Greenway Master Plan, completed in 2019, will commence implementation in 2020 with design and engineering for a trail connection between South New Street to the historic Strode's Barn (Route 52 and Birmingham Road). This is a multi-year, multi-partner project that will be both a community and environmental enhancement for our future. The Township has obtained grant funding from multiple County and State partners to cover most of the cost associated with this first phase. In addition, parking and access improvements are budgeted for the Mt. Bradford Preserve and recreation programs and events designed to engage residents will remain a focus.

- **The proposed budget reflects a commitment to proactively maintaining aging infrastructure to avoid more costly repairs in the future.** The Capital Reserve Fund Budget includes continued funding for road resurfacing as well as fleet and major equipment replacement. The proposed budget also includes funding to address both stormwater drainage from roads and mandated stormwater management through the MS-4 Permit Program. The need for continued funding for bridge infrastructure repairs and replacement is addressed in the proposed budget with the planned design and engineering for the Ashbridge Street culvert. Structural repair and replacement of Township-owned bridge structures is one of the most expensive municipal capital expenditures, as we learned with the recent replacement of the Broad Run Bridge (Valley Creek Road) in 2018. In future years, capital funding will need to be addressed to provide for identified major capital repairs and replacements of existing infrastructure – particularly bridges, stormwater facilities, and roads – to ensure public safety.
- **The proposed budget continues a policy of fiscal stewardship** with the proceeds from the sale of the Township public sewer system in 2018 being managed to ensure a stable financial foundation through careful investment (with the Pennsylvania Local Government Investment Trust). These reserve funds will continue to be a hedge in the event of an unforeseen emergency while serving to maintain the strong credit rating of the Township (AA stable). The current strategy is to utilize the annual returns on investment to support the General Fund (and Capital Reserve Fund) while preserving the principal.
- **The proposed budget begins to lay the groundwork for future investments in clean energy** to ensure that we plan and act for the long term sustainability of the Township and our planet for our generations and those that follow. While the 2020 budget does not propose any specific clean energy capital improvements, it continues to allocate funding for the Township participation in West Chester Area Council of Government Energy Transition Plan that begins to address a sustainable energy future with goals of an all-electric community by 2035 and an all-renewable energy community by 2050.
- **Finally, this proposed budget is realistic in balancing the need to provide essential municipal services with responsible fiscal action and management expected by East Bradford residents.** Financial demands are projected to continue to challenge the Township for the foreseeable years ahead. The Board of Supervisors continuously is monitoring revenues and expenditures and annually will reassess budget performance.

Pursuant to Section 3202 of the Second Class Township Code, the Board may adopt the budget no earlier than 20 days after the proposed budget has been advertised in a newspaper of general circulation. The budget was published in the Daily Local News on November 12, after the proposed budget was presented at the November 7 Board of Supervisors meeting. The Board of Supervisors is scheduled to adopt the budget on the evening of December 10. State law (Second Class Township Code) limits how much the budget can be revised between the time it is advertised and adopted to “no more than ten percent in the aggregate or more than 25 percent in any major category.”

In the meantime, staff welcomes feedback from all residents and property owners on the proposed budget. After all, these proposed expenditures are made with your tax dollars and fees. Everyone in East Bradford Township is an important stakeholder in this important democratic process!

Sincerely,



Mandie Cantlin
Township Manager / Secretary

Michael P. Lynch
Michael P. Lynch
Director of Finance

