

I. OPENING

- A. Call to Order
- B. Roll Call
- C. Pledge of Allegiance
- D. Announcement of Executive Session (if applicable)
- E. Public Comment Procedure

II. PUBLIC COMMENT – AGENDA ITEMS ONLY – RESIDENTS/TAXPAYERS ONLY – 3-MINUTE TIME LIMIT

III. PRESENTATIONS/HEARINGS - None

IV. DEVELOPER ITEMS - None

V. TOWNSHIP BUSINESS ITEMS

- A. Presentation of 2023 Draft Budget

VI. MISCELLANEOUS BUSINESS ITEMS - None

VII. COUNCIL & STAFF REPORTS

- A. Township Manager
- B. Council/Jr. Council Member
- C. Solicitor
- D. Engineer

VIII. PUBLIC COMMENT ON NON-AGENDA ITEMS – RESIDENTS/TAXPAYERS ONLY – 3-MINUTE TIME LIMIT

IX. ADJOURNMENT

UPCOMING MEETINGS

Environmental Advisory Council: October 11, 2022
Township Council: October 19, 2022
Saucon Rail Trail Oversight Commission: October 24, 2022
Zoning Hearing Board: October 24, 2022
Planning Commission: October 27, 2022
Parks & Recreation: November 7, 2022

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I. OPENING

CALL TO ORDER: The General Business & Developer meeting of Lower Saucon Township Council was called to order on Wednesday, October 5, 2022 at 6:30 p.m. with Mr. Jason Banonis, presiding.

ROLL CALL: Present: Jason Banonis, President; Sandra Yerger, Vice President, Priscilla deLeon (speaker phone), and Mark Inglis. Council Members; Mark Hudson, Township Manager; Linc Treadwell, Township Solicitor; Cathy Gorman, Director of Finance/Assistant Manager; Thomas Barndt, Chief of Police; Roger Rasich, Director of Public Works; Erin Jackson, Financial Clerk; Lou Mahlman, Controller; and Stacy Werkheiser, Administrative Assistant. Tom Carocci, Council Member arrived at 6:45 p.m.

PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE

ANNOUNCEMENT OF ANY EXECUTIVE SESSION (IF APPLICABLE) – Mr. Banonis said Council did not meet in executive session this evening.

II. PUBLIC COMMENT – TOWNSHIP RESIDENTS ONLY – 3 MINUTE TIME LIMIT – AGENDA ITEMS ONLY

Mr. Banonis said the Public Comment procedure is on the website and available on the table. We have a three-minute comment period. If anyone would like to speak on any agenda items, please come forward and identify yourself.

- Andrea Wittchen, 1885 Dartford Road said tonight's meeting is how ludicrous your public comment policy is because in order to be able to talk about the draft budget that's on the agenda, a resident has to comment before the budget has been presented and before there has been any explanation of it. She asked under the Library 456 Account, why is the 2022 projected dollar amount \$100,264.00 when as of July 2022, only \$58,355.33 had been spent and of that \$8,355.33 was to Hellertown Area Library (HAL) for services in January and the other \$50,000.00 which, she believes, has been misallocated was a contribution to the Southern Lehigh Public Library (SLPL) to which we have a letter from our Solicitor attesting to that very fact and that there were no services expected or rendered for that. What are you going to be spending that additional \$42,000.00 - \$43,000.00 on between now and the end of the year? If you're not spending it, why is it in the projected column? Why is the 2023 budget number \$100,000.00 when at the last SLPL board meeting, they explained in great detail to the public and offered a supporting documentation that their estimate to join or to add LST to the SLPL service area would require at least \$132,885.00 in fees from LST at the per capita rate of \$11.99 per person which is the same that Upper Saucon Township residents pay. In the possibility that they lose the school funding from Southern Lehigh School Board, which they expect would happen if they expand their service area, they would have to increase that by an additional \$3.00 per head for people from LST which would bring the total required by LST to join the SLPL to about \$135,000.00. Because of the requirements from the State there would be an additional \$150,000.00 required to expand their building so the minimum cost for us to join SLPL would be roughly \$300,000.00 so \$100,000.00 is a little bit short. You would know this if any of you ever bothered to go to their board meetings which no elected official has ever done.
- Laura Ray, 3357 Lower Saucon Road said she has similar comments about the library because she did find it interesting to see \$100,000.00 in there for proposed and wondered what that was for. She had a really hard time trying to make anything of all these numbers all over the place and wondered if it would be possible to get these into an Excel format so we could actually do some analysis ourselves on some of these numbers. She wanted to find out more about the money that came in for the American Rescue Funds. She asked about this at a previous meeting where it was on the statement and now all of a sudden, it's not there on the statement at zero. Looking at this, you can't tell where it's transferred to, how any of it has been used for this year or last year. It looks like the Treasury, for their reporting and compliance, would have required a project and expenditure report filed in April 2022 and last year. She would like to see if she could get a copy of that. She did comparisons between the final budget from 2022 with some of the monthly reports we had and then with the projected report for 2023 and there's a lot of numbers that don't match up, so that is worrisome to her. She noticed in some of the columns where the projected amounts for 2022 were 0's and she does understand yes, some should and are 0's, but some of them definitely would have numbers that we should have at this point and being in the end of the 3Q we should have a pretty good projection for 2022 amounts for some of those. The over and under actual column, she's not

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even sure why it's even put on there because of a lot of the budgeted amounts have been adjusted from what was actually budgeted to where it lands at the end so when it shows we are coming in at budget, it's really not accurate because it was over budget and we just moved money there from somewhere else.

III. PRESENTATIONS/HEARINGS - None

IV. DEVELOPER ITEMS – None

V. TOWNSHIP BUSINESS ITEMS

A. PRESENTATION OF 2023 DRAFT BUDGET

Mrs. Cathy Gorman presented the 2023 draft budget. She said the General Fund budget is balanced at \$8,774,100.00. Total funds are \$16,897,644.00. There is no tax increase to cover the costs. The budget is approximately 3.8% more than what was originally approved last year. We have made those budget transfers during the year to accommodate some of the additional expenses we have received. Those came from our fund balance and she's projecting that the fund balance, without using the landfill funds, should be adequate.

Mrs. Gorman had slides to show the difference between what the Townships has received historically between real estate, enabling tax, and landfill receipts and the next slide shows what those receipts for the landfill fund were typically paid for over the years. The debt was removed some time ago and we've been focusing on using those landfill receipts to be put into our reserves or our Capital Plan for infrastructure improvements.

Mrs. Gorman said Revenue, these are our Real Estate taxes. We are not projecting an increase so they are pretty much stable. She did project a little lower in the Real Estate tax just due to the economy and she's anticipating some assessment appeals and people not being able to fully pay their taxes. That happens with an economy like this, which is just a delay in receiving them.

Mrs. Gorman said the Real Estate Transfer Tax she is considering that on the low side as well just based on interest rates...Mr. Banonis interrupted Mrs. Gorman and said Tom Carocci has arrived at 6:45 p.m. Mrs. Gorman said we are projecting a little bit more in Earned Income Tax. Most of these items are the same and we are not projecting anything too different other than the Cable Franchise Tax which we are projecting a little bit lower as we are all aware people are moving to alternative forms of streaming and that will decrease the tax amount we get.

Mrs. Gorman said Crime Codes and Violations are all pretty much the same and we are not anticipating any great changes in any of those revenues.

Mrs. Gorman said Interest is something she will be looking at. She projected somewhat low; however, due to the Federal Reserve increasing the interest rates we have been seeing significant upturn on that line item, so come to the proposed, she will probably be increasing that modestly.

Mrs. Gorman said State and Public Grants, these are all pretty much the same and we are not changing or modifying what grants we are applying for. These are inclusive of any grants we would isolate that would be Federal, which would be some of the Police Department grants and State levels for the Host Municipal Inspector and some of the other opportunities we have on a smaller scale which are not for a capital infrastructure improvement.

Mrs. Gorman said the State Share Revenue line items she will be adjusting. Pension State Aid came in a little bit higher and we received that money and got several thousand dollars more. The Utility Tax, as well, we received about \$7,400.00 so we will increase those revenues based on what we had received this year.

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Mrs. Gorman said Zoning and Subdivision fees she doesn't see too much of an increase and also the Right-to-Know charges. These are steady and based on volume of what people are requesting.

Mrs. Gorman said for the Police we increased Police Services based on the volume of the requests we received this year. You will see we will be going over in 2022 for our billable overtime for the PD but that coincides with this line of revenue, so whenever the officers are out and either monitoring a golf event or a football game, we bill the entity that is requesting the service.

Mrs. Gorman said Building and Zoning Review and Sanitation Permits are fairly the same. We had a large volume of Building Permits. She's assuming that will stay the same. As housing sales decrease, more people are investing in their current homes. She's thinking next year we will be receiving the same amount if people are able to put some infrastructure repairs into their own homes.

Mrs. Gorman said the Landfill we increased that to \$2.2 million to adjust based on the tipping fees that we received this year and we will definitely be going over the \$2 million mark that we had budgeted for this year. With the approvals they got, it would be safe to assume for the next couple of years that we should be getting around the \$2.2 million.

Mrs. Gorman said Health Charges is revenue we receive from anyone who files for Cobra, and we also partner with the Lower Saucon Authority (LSA) and they reimburse us back for coverage as a small employer. Lower Saucon Township pays for the medical expenses on their behalf, and then they reimburse LST back what was paid. As for refunds from the prior year with \$200,000.00, we are still doing very well with our health insurance reimbursement program and we are also doing fairly well with our Workers Comp. Both of them are self-insured programs so they've been working out fairly well the last couple of years.

Mrs. Gorman said Expenses, these are the items at hand. This PowerPoint is showing the steps of what we do. The Expense budget for 2023 is \$8,138,793.00.

Mrs. Gorman said for Council we are budgeting \$96,649.00, and of that \$40,000.00 we are budgeting for new carpeting for this Council room and if we don't get the live streaming done within the course of the year, we have a buffer amount for next year.

Mrs. Gorman said Administration is \$498,213.00. We were fortunate enough to receive notification from our health insurance company that our life insurance and our short-term disability insurance, other than the escalations for pay, the rates are going to be the same and our health insurance is only going to possibly increase by 1%. There is a meeting next week with Benecon to review the table, but they felt pretty sure and confident not to advise her to budget for a 1% increase.

Mrs. Gorman said some of the items in the Administration would be for the Manager, the Administrative Assistants to the Manager, the Receptionist position, the MMOs, the Pension Plans and Codification of Ordinances. We did increase some for the newsletter and postage and General Expenses and IT to deal with the software issues and the added additional software programming that we need and that goes across every department as it's a shared expense.

Mrs. Gorman said the Finance Department is \$275,394.00. The biggest increase is the Director of Finance/Assistant Manager salary, and she thanked Council for this. They've also decreased some of their wages and benefits from last year because of personnel transitions. Auditing services, they put in the most that they would be obligated to pay just in case we have to do a Federal Single File Audit in the event we come within that threshold of requiring one. The other items are basically the same. We added other features into accounting and the bank services for security purposes.

Mrs. Gorman said Legal is \$211,180.00. This is based on historically what we've been paying for all of our Solicitor's.

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Mrs. Gorman said Information and Technology we increased, and that again is primarily for protection of our servers. We did budget for two replacement servers which was recommended by our IT consultants. We haven't done that yet, so if we don't do it this year, we'll do it next year. It's a matter of getting the time to do it

Mrs. Gorman said Engineering we are budgeting \$194,636.00. We requested a lot of services from our engineer this year and hopefully it will trail down a little; however, there are still some outstanding projects we need their services on including anything that is required with MS4. We successfully transferred the SEO payments to an escrow-based system, and will be doing that with grading as well and eventually moving everything over to the Finance Department when it comes to escrowing for plans and appeals and things of that nature.

Mrs. Gorman said Buildings and Grounds was decreased. We have \$233,655.00, which is primarily decreased because we've moved the fuel costs to the appropriate departments. Instead of putting it in Buildings and Grounds, we moved unleaded gas to the Police and diesel to the Public Works Department. Most of these items are the same. Building and Maintenance we are going to focus on, and we also put in some smaller capital purchases in the budget for replacement of the stairs in the parking lot and the cracks we encountered in the front lobby area.

Mrs. Gorman said the PD is \$3,368,642.00. Some of that is contractual. We've appropriated the fuel costs to that department and there was more funding in IT, a significant amount for the PD. There are some warranties and some software upgrades they need for some of their equipment. This is more of a trend as we keep going, that IT is going to increase. Much like we did with our offices, we are looking at redoing the PD offices and there's funding for their License Plate Reader system. We are always looking for whatever grant we can get to offset those type of expenses and as Council directed, we added partial funding for the Student Resource Officer.

Mrs. Gorman said for the Fire Department, we budgeted \$410,782.00. There's \$225,000.00 allocated to the Fire Department, which was what Council approved last year and the \$10,000.00 for the recruitment and retention. We did receive significant funding for the Fire Relief Fund which was \$92,290.00 this year which is going back to the Fire Department so we are assuming that for next year. The only significant change in the Fire accounts is the contribution to Dewey Ambulance as they requested a \$5,000.00 increase. We've been paying them \$15,000.00 since 2010 when they added to Advance Life Support to the Basic and Advance Life Support provided to LST residents.

Mrs. Gorman said Planning and Zoning is \$257,504.00. The only significant change is we decreased the amount for consultations as we seem to be not really looking for any outside help other than the review that Mr. Marshall recommended. Our Zoning Department is requesting \$8,000.00 for the possibility of buying or implementing a software that would be an interactive software that could go on our website so people could see their property, see what it's zoned and it would be more interactive for the engineers and builders or for whoever is coming in so they can find that information at their fingertips.

Mrs. Gorman said Emergency Management and Crossing Guards, the only item increased was for the potential hazmat issues. The last couple of years there has been one or two incidents on the roads where instead of the fire departments fighting the insurance companies and trying to get repayment for them outsourcing the cleanups, we had been paying the company to do that.

Mrs. Gorman said Dog Control we still have funding for No Nonsense Neutering and we will be monitoring that closely to see if there's an uptake or down.

Mrs. Gorman said the Compost Center is \$10,500.00. She's not sure where that's going at this point. Hopefully, we'll have something more concrete come the proposed but we wanted to make sure there was funding in there because regardless of the situation we are going to end up doing something to pay somebody or to assist or buy something to help with the composting efforts for next year.

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Mrs. Gorman said Public Works Department is \$1,723,556.00 and a large percentage of that is due to transferring over the diesel fuel to their budget. We also put in \$30,000.00 for removal of dead ash trees that are in our right-of-way. This is going to be a more significant issue coming down the line. Typically, she budgets \$100,000.00 in road materials which covers the percentage that the Township pays for the road improvement projects we do, and she increased that by \$55,000.00 just due to the cost of the material. This year we ended up having to have it hauled to us because for us to pick it up, the nearest facility for us to buy the material needed was three hours away.

Mrs. Gorman said Parks and Recreation's budget is \$176,540.00. We budgeted more in maintenance for the parks. We've noticed over the years there are tables and certain apparatus that needed to be replaced. We did have an insurance review. We came out looking pretty good. They made some recommendations which we all addressed. We budgeted extra money for that. We increased the pool pass option. We are still reviewing how we are going to do that, but she thinks we will go back to what we used to do which is reimbursing the resident for the pass they buy for the difference between the resident and non-resident rate.

Mrs. Gorman said we did receive from the Saucon Valley Community Center (SVCC) today what their estimate was for the children's programming which was \$4,000.00 more than what she put in; however, they do bill us at their cost so she may increase that based on what was provided, but she doesn't think we will actually be expending that. The director at SVCC is estimating a larger percentage of children showing up at these programs. We are also addressing the need at Steel City, so that cost is put in the program for a recreational option at that park.

Mrs. Gorman said the library donation we put in at \$100,000.00, and we are awaiting Council's recommendation on that. We didn't want to assume anything.

Mrs. Gorman said we have no debt. The rest of the budget is for insurances. It's \$269,851.00 that covers bonding, general liability, workers' compensation, and all our commercial packages and coverages. We budgeted \$1,100.00 for Conservation. Our Environmental Advisory Council (EAC) has become a little bit more active, so we are funding that department based on their requests for going to trainings and other things they might need. The other items are reimbursables that we are either collecting the money or we are paying out, whether it's prior year expenses. Intergovernmental expenses are also in there.

Mrs. Gorman said with the expenses outlined, we will still have \$635,307.00 more in revenue than expenses, which we are recommending the \$315,000.00 again going into our Capital Plans and then \$320,000.00 would be excess revenue.

Mrs. Gorman said for our Special Funds, our Fire Tax is still bringing in \$330,000.00. We are budgeting for the consultant for any future grants which seems to have some success and the next payment for the ladder truck that Council would be considering funding.

Mrs. Gorman said Open Space, most of the items covered under this will be coming from our fund balance because the tax is sunset. She's projecting only \$5,000.00 of delinquent taxes may be coming in from the last couple of years; however, we did budget for funding for the maintenance of the parks which we split between General and Open Space. Open Space handles the properties that we purchased with the Open Space funds. We budgeted \$500,000.00 from that and Maintenance to go to the Easton Road Ballfield development and we also have funding in there for any acquisitions and also any services related to those acquisitions. The State Liquid Fuel Funding we budgeted \$939,000.00 which we will be using the fund balance for that as well. We budgeted a lot in that fund for road projects so Roger can be aggressive in continuing his paving projects for 2023.

Mrs. Gorman said in the Capital Fund we will be utilizing fund balance. She recognized grants in here that we are applying for and we are awaiting confirmation and a lot of these will not be done

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unless we have the grants. Some of them we already have so we will be trying to get them out of the way and we are going to be aggressive in trying to get a lot of the park infrastructure and the road projects done next year. We've put in \$1 million for the Steel City paving in the event we go that route. We are projecting excess revenues over expenditures for 2022, she will be recommending those funds going into the Capital Funds so we are not totally depleting that bank account.

Mrs. Gorman said the PD is requesting Units 164 and 165 to be replaced at \$110,529.00 and the replacement of their radios for \$45,000.00. The Public Works Department has several approved vehicles that we are waiting on and he is requesting to replace Truck No. 8, which is their aerial vehicle for \$175,000.00, their case roller for \$50,000.00 and a skid steer blade which is going to cost \$45,000.00. That will replace a piece of apparatus that is on our inventory list. Instead of replacing that piece of apparatus, the blade itself can be attached to the skid steer so it will provide the same function.

Mrs. Gorman said for our Historical Fund, she and Mr. Hudson are currently working on the grant we received for the windows at the Widows House and that needs to be completed by June. Hopefully, we'll have those bid specs to Council to approve to rebid again and get these windows done and close out the grant.

Mrs. Gorman said some of the items here we will be modifying until we get confirmation. Mr. Banonis said he likes the last slide where we compare it to neighboring municipalities in terms of the millage and it looks like we are at the bottom which means we are doing a good job in managing finances. He appreciates all she does.

Mr. Banonis said line item 01-400-110, you mentioned Tom Carocci and he are waiving salaries or Council compensation and he agrees to do that again for 2023. The next item is 01-410-130 which is the School Resource Officer and there's \$72,508.80. He just wants to be clear that the amount we are budgeting there is for a LST Police Officer serving in the role as a SRO, not that we are going to be giving this money to the school district as a stipend or a grant to subsidize their private contracted security services, is that correct? Mrs. Gorman said the SRO in the documentation that you have is a salary for a first-year LST Police Officer. We are recommending, based on what Council's discussion, was 25% which would have been the \$19,034.00. That will be paid depending on what course of action that Council chooses; it is just going to sit there. Mr. Banonis said 01-481-000 the Intergovernmental Expenses, there is \$15,000.00 there and he thought he saw somewhere along the way where it mentions the Saucon Valley Partnership (SVP) and he just wants to make sure the money that's in the budget is not for the SVP because Hellertown Borough decided to withdraw from that partnership and it seems to be defunct and will probably go away at the end of this year. Mrs. Gorman said that money is specifically for us in paying anything that is required to Department of Community and Economic Development (DCED) or for Hellertown Borough in conjunction with the DUI Program or the Seatbelt Safety Program that we received a grant funding for because we are usually the administrator of the grants and then we pay Hellertown Borough's portion of that if they opt to participate. Mr. Banonis said there's a chart that you provided to us with the charitable contributions that the Township makes and among them are to SV Soccer \$1,500.00; Lehigh Valley Coalition for Affordable Housing \$2,000.00; SV Baseball is \$1,500.00; Miracle League of NC \$2,500.00; SV Basketball is \$1,500.00; SV Cheerleading is \$1,500.00; SV Football is \$1,500.00; SV Rail Trail is \$1,000.00; SV Wrestling is \$1,500.00; SV Lacrosse is \$1,500.00; Hellertown Halloween Parade is \$1,000.00; Second Harvest Food Bank is \$1,500.00; and Meals on Wheels of the Greater LV is \$1,500.00. Do we know with regard to the sports organizations, what other municipalities participate in those and what contributions they made? Mrs. Gorman said she does not. The most that she does know is that she believes Hellertown might waive some field fees for some of these programs if they are using Dimmick, but so do we. Mr. Banonis said these other causes, the LV Coalition on Affordable Housing, Miracle League of NC, Second Harvest Food Bank and Meals on Wheels of the Greater LV, those are organizations which are located outside of LST but provide some services perhaps to residents within the Township, correct? Mrs. Gorman said

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correct. Mr. Banonis said they also provide services throughout the Lehigh Valley or Northampton County and/or Lehigh County, correct? Mrs. Gorman said correct.

Mr. Banonis said there's two items he'd like to amend in terms of the proposed budget. The first is 01-456-500 which is library services. The library contribution you provided there was budgeted at \$100,000.00. He proposes we increase that to \$160,000.00. He thinks it's important to have adequately budgeted money in the event that we find a library that wants to partner with us and treat us like a partner and be transparent in its information that it shares with us and also provides us with appropriate representation on its board. In light of some lack of clarity as to what may occur next year, he thinks we should increase that from \$100,000.00 to \$160,000.00.

Mr. Carocci said he agrees with the increase but he'd like some caveats, some footnotes there. The one thing is he would like our residents, if they so choose, to be able to get a non-resident card at either the Bucks County Libraries or the Lehigh-Carbon Counties. Bucks County is \$20.00 for a non-resident library card and Lehigh-Carbon is \$40.00. It gives them access to other libraries they may want to use and they may not want to join HAL so they would have a card. He wants that to be considered in library services funding because it's reimbursement to an individual resident not a library. They come in, they prove they are a resident, they prove they purchased a non-resident library card in the State of PA, or anywhere, that we reimburse them the \$20.00 or \$40.00 it costs for that card. It's just an option we should offer to our residents. It gives them a choice. They may want a different type of facility that HAL doesn't offer. Some it may be convenient for their work commutes. They may like the programs that the library offers a little bit more than HAL. A lot of libraries, that he considers, more beneficial programs especially for adults. Mr. Banonis said he'll withdraw his motion and add that on as a footnote to the motion. Mr. Carocci said he'd also like for some of that \$160,000.00 to be used for some type of mailing to Township residents letting them know about this program and the library cards, what they cost, what libraries they can go to such as Riegelsville, Whitehall, Lower Macungie, Southern Lehigh, so they are aware of it. He'd like that to come out of the \$160,000.00 as well, the mailing to Township residents specifically on this issue. He thinks it will give this Council a good idea of our resident's interest in using other libraries and which ones they are and we'll get some resident feedback as to whether they are happy with it or not. He doesn't expect it to be a large number of people, but he thinks it's a program we should have. He will go along with the \$160,000.00 with the understanding that some of that is going to be used for those two purposes and those will be considered library services under our budget. Mr. Banonis said you had mentioned certain areas, you are including other libraries in Northampton County too such as Bethlehem and Bangor and Easton and other places like that, correct? Mr. Carocci said yes but he wouldn't include the HAL in that only because we have a letter from the Office of Commonwealth Libraries (OCL) that says they have to serve us until the end of 2023, so why would we reimburse them for non-resident rates when the OCL said they have to service us until the end of 2023. Maybe next year's budget that would happen. Mr. Banonis said if that were to change, that arrangement, then obviously if people wanted to go to the HAL, they could use this reimbursement if they so choose to get a membership at the HAL. Mr. Carocci said that's correct. The OCL said they have to serve us to 2023 so he doesn't expect that to happen until at least 2024. Mr. Banonis said but it may and he just wants to cover it. Mr. Banonis said he doesn't think we need a motion for that, we have a consensus on that.

Ms. deLeon said has a comment if she may. She didn't want to interrupt Mr. Banonis as she isn't sure if he is finished with his comments. She said this was on her list to talk about also, when Cathy mentioned on the slide presentation about activity Council would recommend, to this date and it's been over a year, a long time, that we have this issue with the HAL and Council majority voted with threatened litigation to the HAL and up until this date and she's comparing this to another threatened litigation cases that we would have where the Solicitor would take us into Executive Session and explain to us and update us what's going on, on a regular basis, so we would get direction so Cathy asked for activities Council recommends, she feels she's left out in the dark because she has no idea what's going on. She sees Solicitor bills for...Mr. Banonis said he's going to interrupt her for a second, he's not done with his comments. He thought she was speaking on the library issue and he

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doesn't know what she's talking about now but if she wants to talk about the library topic he brought up, feel free. He'll let her know when he's done with his other proposals and then he'll hand it off to someone else who may have comments on the budget. Are you talking about the library or what are you talking about? Ms. deLeon said she's talking about the library, but if you want to go ahead and talk about your concept of a library, she'll wait until she has the floor and she'll talk about her concept of the library. How about we do that? Mr. Banonis said Tom has brought up a proposal in addition to his (Mr. Banonis) funding recommendation to increase it to \$160,000.00 and he's trying to understand if we have a consensus for that. Ms. deLeon said you do not have my consensus. Mr. Banonis said he hadn't asked that yet, Ms. deLeon said she was sorry, and he know she may not be able to hear him too well as she is not here. Mr. Banonis stated that he thinks Tom has agreed he's interested in this, he thinks Mark has as well, and he thinks Sandy has as well, so that's the consensus that four of them have. He asked if Ms. deLeon was in agreement with that or not? Ms. deLeon said no she's not.

Mr. Banonis said pursuant to the consensus we have with 4 out of the 5 of us, to increase the budgeted amount of library services from \$100,000.00 to \$160,000.00 with a footnote that the funding may also be used to reimburse LS residents who elect to purchase an individual or family membership for library services up to the amount of \$20.00 per individual and \$40.00 for a family membership provided they provide proof of payment; and provide a mailing to LST residents about the availability of this program to pursue and get memberships at libraries of their choice.

Mr. Banonis said he doesn't know where we would put this into the budget, but he's been to the Heller Homestead a number of times now including most recently with the Parks and Recreation Board, and he was talking about this to Roger and the ruins from the old barn continue to exist there and they are fenced in with a chain link fence. First of all, it's fairly unsightly as nothing has been done with it for at least a decade or more. He thinks it's an attractive nuisance and a risk if children were to climb over the fence to get in there, he'd like to see that cleaned up and cleared up. He doesn't think there's going to be anything done to rebuild that structure, nothing has been done by Council in more than a decade. The space there could probably be repurposed and used for other recreational purposes. In talking with Roger, if we were to budget \$20,000.00 for that, he's not sure where you'd want to put it in the budget but at least the line item would be there to address those issues. Mr. Banonis asked if there was a consensus among Council on this. Mark Inglis indicated yes if it is dangerous, Sandy said yes as long as we know what we are doing and have a plan from Roger. Mr. Banonis said PW could take care of the removal of the materials and then there's just an issue of the disposal. Tom Carocci said yes. Ms. deLeon said how much are we talking about getting rid of, flattening it out or keeping the arch. Mr. Banonis said he's proposing \$20,000.00 to remove whatever appears to be unsafe and unsightly. Right now, it's a chain link fence with a pile of rubble. That space could be cleaned up and better utilized. We aren't voting on the actual work right now; we are voting on the budget monies to address the remediation of the property. Ms. deLeon said she'd like to know a little more about what's included in that. Mr. Banonis said so we have another 4 to 1 so if you would add that to the budget. Mrs. Yerger said if you want to stipulate based on the assessment by Roger too, we can do that and on what is safe and unsafe in that area. Mr. Banonis said sure. He then asked is any part of it safe now? There's a fence around it and there's a reason for that. Ms. deLeon said so nobody steals the stuff because people were stealing the stone. That's the reason the fence is around it. Mr. Banonis said that's all he has.

Mr. Carocci said staff salaries next year, he knows we have a study going on, but he feels we should budget an amount like maybe 3% or something just to have something in the budget if the study comes back and says the people should be paid more. He's not proposing the employees get a 3% raise January 1st, but we budget for raises and see what happens. They are not going to get the raises January 1st, they will be budgeted and we will see what the pay study says and then we can then make adjustments, but we need something in the budget now. Mr. Hudson said we can put a 3% in those line items and have that ready. Mr. Banonis said he agrees with that. Mrs. Yerger said she agrees. Ms. deLeon said she agrees, and asked when we had a time period when we are going to get that study back? Mr. Hudson said he's hoping to get it back in early November. Ms. deLeon said okay.

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Mr. Carocci said he has an article where 17 states, including PA, that are giving out Inflation Relief Checks as gas is up in the past year according to the Biden Labor Department, 25.6% gas; 15.8% electric; food at home 13.5%, new vehicles 10.1%, food away from home 8%, used cars and trucks 7.8%, shelter 6.2%, medical services 5.6% and apparel 5.1%. He is going to propose this year, again, that staff bonuses or checks to come out of the American Relief Fund (ARF) money. Mr. Carocci asked for his spreadsheet to be pulled up on the screen. Basically, according to Cathy, and she confirmed this, the balance in the ARF is approximately \$992,000.00. If we give a \$2,500.00 bonus to all employees, but \$1,250.00 bonuses to our three part-time employees, that comes to \$91,250.00, which would decrease the ARF to \$901,742.00. Is he correct that we have to spend this money by 2023 or give it back? Mr. Hudson said it's 2024 that we have to have it allotted, and it has to be spent by 2026. Mr. Carocci said this would be for employees under contract as it was last year or non-union that are not under contract. He would like to propose that. You'll also see where Cathy had earmarked a couple of grant applications - \$500,000.00 for the Easton Road Fields which we don't know if we'll be spending that money or not, but just assuming we are, that would take the balance down to \$401,742.00 but he'd like to vote on the staff bonuses for this year. They are paying more for groceries, more to go to work, come to work, they have to come to work, they don't work from home and they do a great job and they are the Township's most valuable asset as our employees and he wants to keep them as it is a competitive job market, so that's what he's proposing this year. Mr. Banonis said he agrees with him and we should put that on an agenda and we'll vote on it. He agrees with the idea, we have an excellent staff and it's important to provide some level of relief to them even though it is a minimal amount, it is still something that helps offset their daily expenses they are incurring as a result of terrible policy decisions that have been made at other levels. Mr. Carocci said he wanted to bring it up now since we are talking about spending and staff compensation and didn't want to leave it out. Mr. Banonis asked Mr. Inglis and Mrs. Yerger if they were good with this and they both said yes. Mr. Carocci said he'd like this on the agenda for the 19th and have a vote on it as it is going to be money that is going to be budgeted. He'd like to get it paid the first paycheck in December like it was last year. Mr. Banonis asked Ms. deLeon what her position on this was, and she said that's coming out of this year's budget and is going to be talked about as an agenda item? Mr. Banonis said correct. Ms. deLeon said she doesn't have a problem with that.

Mr. Carocci said you increased the pool reimbursements to \$15,000.00 which would allow approximately 200 families at \$75.00 to go to either to the Southern Lehigh Pool or the Hellertown Pool and get a \$75.00 reimbursement. We'll see what the numbers are and if it has to be increased, we will do that. Mr. Banonis said you are referring to municipal pools, not clubs? Mr. Carocci said yes, just municipal pools, Southern Lehigh and Hellertown and unless Fountain Hill opens their pool again, that is okay too or even Bethlehem.

Mr. Carocci said the Dewey Ambulance, is anyone going to speak on this? Mr. Banonis said Cathy talked about increasing the funding for it. Mr. Carocci asked if we have these numbers for the screen. He wants to point some things out and he's for the \$5,000.00 increase. He talked to Kyle and as part of being liaison of Fire Services, their fuel cost has increased, the truck maintenance has increased, but he is concerned about Hellertown. If you go down to the call numbers, we have about 11,000 population, Hellertown has about 5,500 or so, and you'll see these are calls for Dewey Ambulance. In 2017, they had 487 more calls; 2018 they had 419 more calls; 2019 they had 499 calls; 2020 they had 192 more calls and 2021 they had 412 more calls. We're twice the population and they are using the service at 400 to 500 times more than we are. They are only contributing \$5,000.00 annually in their budget. Somehow, they have \$75,000.00 in the ARF money to give to a library that has \$450,000.00 in the bank, but they can't come up for more for emergency ambulance services for their residents. He finds that disappointing and quite frankly he thinks the residents should find it unacceptable, but having said that, it's important to our residents so the \$5,000.00 contribution will go. Kyle also talked about some capital projects that Dewey has and he provided a list of his wish list which he (Mr. Carocci) had asked him to put together. The first three are kind of pricey, and he wants to really focus on 4, 5, and 6. No. 4 are the life packs, theirs are over 15 years old and they can be updated, they work with Lucas 3 which has a high survival rate, which is \$12,150.20 and he

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provided an invoice estimate of that. No. 5 are four of these video laryngoscopes to put them in the hands of the paramedics. They are more advanced to place the tubes properly. No. 6 is an upgrade and replacement of 13 windows of the second-floor portion of the building that is used by the EMS. Most don't open properly and he has a quote for \$15,892.00 for this. He wouldn't mind Council considering doing No 4 and 5, but again, he has a footnote and caveat that Hellertown Borough has to do No. 6. If they don't do No. 6 for \$15,892.00 then we don't do No. 4 and 5. If they do No. 6, then we will do No 4 and 5 and we can take that money out of the ARF money as well and that would decrease that 400,000.00 that's remaining after the ballfield and after bonuses to about \$375,000.00. He doesn't think we can continue to subsidize Hellertown on ambulance services when he feels they are financially irresponsible giving \$75,000.00 from the ARF to the library that had \$450,000.00 in the bank. How much do we have to subsidize this borough? Mr. Banonis said he wants to be clear on No. 4 and 5, are you talking about LST paying the full amount or anticipating that Hellertown would pay some part of it? Mr. Carocci said we'd pay the full amount of 4 and 5, they would pay the full amount of 6, so they would pay about \$16,000.00 and we would pay about \$25,000.00. Mr. Banonis said they would pay for improvements to the building located within their borough. Mr. Carocci said that's right, he would like to keep it separate, and only if they do the other one first. Mr. Banonis said he's fine with that; Mr. Inglis agreed; Mrs. Yerger said yes, and Ms. deLeon said what page is that on? Mr. Hudson said page 3 of what he sent to her. Ms. deLeon said she's in favor of paying Dewey the \$5,000.00 and she's not sure about the other one. Mr. Banonis said we have a consensus of 4. Ms. deLeon said you always have your consensus; that's great.

Ms. deLeon said back to the SRO, she thought the school district hired a firm to be their SRO, is that correct? Mr. Banonis said that is correct. Ms. deLeon said then why are we putting an amount in the budget to have another police officer go out there when if something would happen the police would respond. Mr. Banonis said this past year we budgeted for it as well and circumstances may change where the school district may decide that they do not want to maintain that contract they have with the third party private security vendor and instead prefer to have a LST Police Officer serve in the role as a SRO. We are not spending the money just to be clear; we are just budgeting for that possibility.

Ms. deLeon said streaming we had talked about this since COVID, and some of you weren't on Council yet, but we always said that was a priority and she would think it would be more of a priority before carpeting, so Mark do you want to comment on the progress on streaming and making it a priority in this budget? Mr. Hudson said he has one company in with a quote and he asked for clarification and he is waiting for a second company to come in so we can have three quotes. Ms. deLeon said she's asking him to make this a priority and she hopes the other Council members support that. Mr. Banonis said we talked about this at the last meeting and there was some pending legislation that may affect the validity and usability of such a system. You weren't at that meeting Priscilla and didn't hear about that. If you looked at your Township News that comes in every month, there's a reference in there for pending legislation that may or may not affect the ability to stream meetings and how that system would operate. Until we have clarification from the State as to what is permitted and what is not permitted, it would be foolish to spend money on a system that could be obsolete based upon the signing by the Governor if and when it becomes enacted into law.

Ms. deLeon said one of our residents during public comment brought up the possibility of having the budget in a spreadsheet, is that possible Cathy? Mrs. Gorman said what was provided was in a spreadsheet. She hesitates in doing that, but she could if Council directs her to, that's fine, her concern is when spreadsheets are opened up, people accidently change numbers which has happened already, so she tries to avoid using Excel in those kinds of functions. Numbers can change, so she tries to use our database as much as possible. The database can export to Excel, so that information is there. Ms. deLeon said can you do that for her in Excel? Mrs. Gorman said sure. Mr. Carocci said hold on, if these numbers can be compromised, they can't be compromised now but can be compromised in Excel. Mrs. Gorman said yes in Excel. Mr. Carocci said he's voting against that. Mr. Banonis said he has a problem with asking Staff as a Council to do a report in a format that a certain Council person prefers. We are all equal members of this Council and the format he received

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was sufficient for his purposes. It's the same format we've used for a number of years. He asked Ms. deLeon if she received an email of all of this data? Ms. deLeon said she did. Mr. Banonis said he's fine with the format he received. Mr. Carocci said he's fine and doesn't want to put in a format for anybody, a Council member, or anybody that can be manipulated such as Excel as numbers can change. Mr. Banonis said Mark and Sandy just indicated they are fine with it as well, and Cathy doesn't have to undertake that. Mrs. Yerger said she got the same format that everybody else got in a format that cannot be adjusted, so she is not sure what the issue is.

Ms. deLeon said she has some additional comments on the library. She doesn't remember wording activity according how Council recommends....she said what she's missing is there is no meetings and we have threatened litigation and you guys made a motion so that's covered under the Sunshine Law. We should be updated and she's not updated. She's assuming you guys are updated and that's why they aren't asking questions. Mr. Banonis said he is going to try to get her back on point and said we are here for a budget and the budget is allocating money for different things that the Township is going to incur costs, revenue projections, and its expense projections, that's what we are here for. He doesn't know what she's talking about with the Sunshine Law and litigation, and he doesn't know where that fits in with the budget process. Ms. deLeon said you are being very vivid right now and she's asking Cathy to explain the words she put in next to library and it says, and she can't find the right page, that activity Council recommends, is that what it said Cathy – she asked Cathy to confirm. Mrs. Gorman said she was awaiting for clarification....Ms. deLeon said awaiting Council and asked Cathy to continue. Mr. Carocci said a dollar amount, right? Cathy said for a dollar amount and she certainly wasn't going to make assumptions based on the fact that Council is still working on this. Ms. deLeon said when you say Council, you are including her too, correct? Mrs. Gorman said correct. Ms. deLeon said since she's not in all these conversations of what is going on and where we are getting these numbers from, she just had some questions which she has every right to ask. Mr. Banonis said have your questions been answered Priscilla? Ms. deLeon said oh absolutely.

Attorney Treadwell said let him make one point really clear. There's no litigation, there's no need for an Executive Session to discuss litigation because there is no litigation. The Council direction back in January or February was to authorize the Solicitor to, in his sole discretion, file litigation if it was necessary. So far it hasn't been necessary. There's no update to litigation and we can't have an Executive Session because there's no litigation or potential litigation so at the moment there's no reason for it. That could change and if it does, he will let Council know immediately. Ms. deLeon said okay, so since you are having meetings with everybody on the library, are you keeping the rest of Council updated on your activities? Mr. Banonis said who are you referring to? Ms. deLeon said Linc, he's talking. Attorney Treadwell said since he's having meetings with whom? Ms. deLeon said with other library personnel. Attorney Treadwell said he certainly had meetings with library personnel which was again a direction that came from a Council meeting in January or February to investigate other options and there's nothing to report other than he's continuing to have discussions. Ms. deLeon said okay, she just wants to make sure the path he goes down is approved or not approved by all five Council members, that is all she is saying. Mr. Banonis said it doesn't have to be all five, it has to be by a majority of Council which we did on January 19th. Attorney Treadwell said he doesn't have a vote; he can't go down a path by himself. Ms. deLeon said okay as long as she's clear on that. Mr. Banonis asked Ms. deLeon if she had any further. Ms. deLeon said not at the moment.

VI. MISCELLANEOUS BUSINESS ITEMS – None

VII. COUNCIL & STAFF REPORTS

A. TOWNSHIP MANAGER – MARK HUDSON

- He said Lower Saucon Road Bridge project is moving along. We did get a waiver to work into October. We have a picture of the culvert being flown into place by the crane. The next picture was in the rain. The culvert is in, and the cement truck is filling it in and grouting in the culvert. They were having another truck come in the other side as the crane was ready to leave. They are working to get out of the creek as expeditiously as possible and we hope to have the road open this year, hopefully in November.

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Mr. Banonis said he wants to thank Mr. Hudson and especially Roger and Brien. Brien got an extension from DEP otherwise this work would have had to shut down September 30th. He appreciates it and he knows the Township residents appreciate it a lot. It's been a lot of work for you guys to get this work done in terms of relocating utilities, getting DEP approval, coordinating with the contractor, the manufacturers, now combatting the rainstorm we have had over the past four or five days. It's been a long time coming, and the delay has not been as a result of the Township, far from it, the delay was because of DEP regulations, but you guys have done a great job in getting this together in a timely manner in a compressed schedule to make sure this is online in the next couple weeks – thank you. Mrs. Yerger said thank you and the residents are very happy.

B. COUNCIL

Mrs. Yerger

- She wanted to thank Roger and all those involved with the bridge project on Lower Saucon Road. She is thankful for their perseverance.

Mr. Inglis

- He went to his first Parks and Rec. meeting on Monday night and there's not too much going on. A couple items with the Steel City Park which we are going to bring up at the October 19th meeting. Everyone wants to do a nice shout out to Carol for a job well done for the Movies in the Park which we will proceed with next year.
- He went to the Compost meeting with Tom the other day and Hellertown was there. Roger was there as well, and it was very productive. Everybody there, all 10 or 12 of us, and everybody gets along and thinks it's a great project. There were no complaints and no problems from everyone involved, so he thinks we should try to pursue that. He thinks Linc and Mark had a fairly good meeting on Monday with that, so we should push that forward. If for some reason, Hellertown doesn't want to keep us on, we have some options for Township residents to get rid of their Christmas trees and then by that time we'll have some options available for yard waste. He did call a couple of people in his line of work and he does have mulch contacts. He said there has been some concern about some of the mulch getting old and not usable. He did ask one of his suppliers to stop by and see what she thinks and she is going to get back to him on that. Mulch is only good for a year. Once it gets to the one-year time frame, it starts to compost and turns muddy and dirty. Any used should be in the first year and the availability to get rid of it should also be in the first year. Mr. Carocci said the mulch at the Compost Center is untreated meaning if a tree was diseased and it is then mulch...Mr. Inglis said he doesn't think the process treats it, he thinks it's just in wind turning and putting air into the process. He doesn't think they use any chemicals or treat it all to kill the weeds. He's not a mulch expert so he doesn't know. Everyone was on board, and we called it a very productive partnership. It's kind of out of our hands, so we'll see where it goes. We all are in, that is what he is trying say. Sandy and Tom added this is great.

Mr. Carocci

- He wanted to thank Cathy, Township staff and Mark for putting this proposed budget together. It's thorough and he looks forward to voting on it next time.

Mr. Banonis – No report

Ms. deLeon

- She dittoed some of the compliments from the other Council member's reports.

C. SOLICITOR – No report

D. ENGINEER – Not present

VIII. PUBLIC COMMENT - NON-AGENDA ITEMS – RESIDENTS/TAXPAYERS ONLY – 3-MINUTE TIME LIMIT - None

IX. ADJOURNMENT

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MOTION BY: Mrs. Yerger moved for adjournment. The time was 7:57 p.m.
SECOND BY: Mr. Banonis
ROLL CALL: 5-0

Submitted by:

Mark Hudson
Township Manager

Jason Banonis
Council President