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Amity Township supervisors angry following closed session

Officials propose tentative spending plan of \$3.73 million without any tax increases

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There's been plenty of tension at Amity Township supervisors meetings in recent months.

So it came as no surprise that with the deadline for advertising a tentative 2013 budget quickly approaching, some supervisors felt the need to make public statements before Wednesday night's meeting.

Supervisor Richard Gokey started off by stating he would like meetings to be recorded.

"Some of the comments made by a supervisor affronted my character and reputation and I'm not going to stand for that," Gokey explained.

Supervisor Terry Jones said the comments Gokey was referring to were actually just questions Jones had raised and had come during an executive session, not in public.

"If that offends your integrity, so be it, but I have a right to ask a question and I did," Jones said.

Supervisors Chairman Robert R. Yanos said he felt there was unnecessary hostility during the meeting and executive session Nov. 7.

He added that the supervisors also discussed some budget issues during the executive session, which is reserved for litigation and personnel issues.

"We looked like mutes during the meeting, but we sure as heck had plenty to say at the executive session," Gokey said, referring to the budget discussion. "This isn't the way it should be."

The supervisors were able to agree on a tentative \$3.73 million budget without any tax increase. A \$72,000 deficit will be covered with money from the township's \$1.8 million reserve fund. The deficit includes \$10,000 in the general fund budget and \$62,000 in the fire tax budget.

The majority of the deficit can be attributed to the new radios that police and firefighters need because of the county's plans to make a federally mandated switch to an upgraded communications system. The price tags for the fire and police radios are about \$37,200 and \$18,000, respectively.

Before the supervisors reached an agreement on the tentative budget, Gokey questioned Chief Kent Shuebrook's salary and the provision of funds to buy a new patrol car.

Other supervisors explained that Shuebrook must get a raise because his salary is pegged to that of the next highest-ranking officer, which is going up as the result of an arbitration ruling earlier in the year.

Gokey also suggested that the department try to get closer to 175,000 miles out of each police vehicle instead of the current 135,000.

Shuebrook said he did not feel comfortable having his officers using vehicles with that much wear and tear.

Jones added that the Pennsylvania State Police replaces vehicles once they hit 90,000 miles.

The supervisors agreed to defer a decision on the vehicle.

Supervisor Kim McGrath was not at the meeting. Yanos said she was on vacation but had not informed her fellow supervisors of her plans at their meeting Nov. 7.

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