

<http://www.berksmontnews.com/article/20120611/NEWS01/120619994/amity-approves-3-5-percent-police-contract>

The Amity Township Board of Supervisors unanimously approved on June 6 a new, three-year police contract with an arbitrated 3.5 percent annual increase that is retroactive to Jan. 1.

That increase is on top of a four percent increase the police department arbitrated three years ago, and which expired Dec. 31, 2011.

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Board Chairman Robert R. Yanos said without a new, large revenue stream the township's options for 2013 with this increased expense will be to increase taxes or reduce the police force.

He said the board did not increase taxes for 2012 despite the tight budget.

Supervisor Kimberly J. McGrath was absent from the meeting.

Township Solicitor Brian F. Boland said future police contract negotiations would most likely require arbitration with another three to four percent annual increase.

Police contract negotiations began in March 2011, and the police requested arbitration in September.

Arbitrator was Attorney Richard C. McNeill, Jr., Philadelphia.

"I don't see any Wawas coming in here, or Giants, and I don't see us coming up with a great golden egg," said Supervisor Richard L. Gokey. "We have two choices - to come up with revenue or cut the police department."

"The most expensive cost in our township is the police department at 3.5 percent per year," said Gokey. "Have to cut the most expensive part of our budget."

Yanos said this arbitrated contract could also have an effect on future contract negotiations with its staff, consultants and teamsters, who didn't receive any salary rate increases for 2012.

"We're in a moral dilemma," said Yanos. "We told our professional staff, teamsters, and consultants 'no raise.' Three-and-a-half to five percent in pay raises with health care - to me that is not sustainable. There is \$50 million less earnings reported by the school district."

He said the board and township staff will review the 2013 budget figures before deciding on a course of action.

"We need to look at where the numbers are going to take us," said Yanos.

In other business:

The township heard a presentation by Econ Opportunities, Inc., Reading, on replacing the township's 148 traffic lights with LED lights for a potential 10-year savings of \$51,000.

The lights would be guaranteed for 15 years and the 15-year net savings are estimated at \$84,108.

Supervisor Terry L. Jones, Streets Division supervisor for the Borough of Pottstown, said LED traffic lights in the borough are cleared of snow with an air compressor; LED bulbs don't emit heat to melt snow.

Township Manager Charles E. Lyon said the township may also want to consider replacing its street lights with the LED technology.

Jones said the presentation was not a proposal and he wouldn't comment without real facts and numbers.

The township unanimously approved hiring Patrick Moore at \$18.98 an hour to be equipment operator/laborer in the Public Works Department.