

Boone library is temporarily in Amity Township budget

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By Denise Larive, News Writer

The Amity Township Board of Supervisors voted on Oct. 20 to temporarily include the township's \$15,000 annual donation to the Boone Area Library, Birdsboro, in its 2011 budget.

Amity's contribution would ensure the library receives \$26,000 in matching money for a total of \$41,000.

Board of Supervisors Chairman Robert R. Yanos said the township's 2011 budget indicates a deficit of \$117,000 without the \$15,000 library expense.

"I am still going on my earlier request to the board if it is our intent to present a budget without raising taxes," said Yanos, adding that the board unanimously voted to reduce expenses instead of raising the millage rate above 1.8 mills.

Following a presentation by library Director Michelle Kehoe, the board voted on Oct. 20 to temporarily include the \$15,000 for further board discussion.

She said without the \$15,000, the library would lose \$11,431 from the county (a \$1 contribution for each township resident) and the promised \$15,000 from J.P. Mascaro. Mascaro's contribution promise to the library in 2008 of \$75,000 throughout the next five years included the stipulation of continued contributions by the Borough of Birdsboro and Union and Amity townships. Kehoe said the library's operating budget is \$199,000. Two years ago there was an \$80,000 deficit when Mascaro made the contribution promise. The library has received \$30,000 from Mascaro the last two years. Yanos said he is very unwilling to cut the money.

"You're getting a \$1 match from the county and then the Mascaro factor is in there," he said. "I'm loath to do it without a tax increase. Another thing out there is to draw down on our reserve. If no calamity befalls us I think we can get by another year [after donating \$15,000 to the library]."

In other business:

- Parks and Recreation Board President Harold Boyer requested approximately \$28,000 of repairs to the tennis courts and basketball courts at Lake Drive Recreation Area and Amity Community Park. "Delaying it wouldn't be good," said Boyer. "We have great facilities and we would like to keep on top of them."

He said repairs for the next year are now approximately \$58,000.

“We have to find the money or raise taxes because we need to maintain our infrastructure,” said Supervisor Terry L. Jones, adding that the Amity Community Park cost \$1 million.

“I have maintenance concerns in all of our departments and there are a lot of things that should be fixed,” said Yanos. “I agree we have money tied up in Amity Community Park and we can’t let the courts deteriorate. I just don’t know where the magic money is going to come from.”

- Township Manager Charles E. Lyon said Amity’s 1.8 millage rate (including .5 mills hydrant/fire tax) is one of the lowest in the county for municipalities that have a full time police force.

“What would you rather have — a few less services or taxes raised?” Yanos asked the board. “I’m trying to keep our taxes low because the school district taxes are so high.” Yanos said the board will begin discussing a construction expansion of its Waste Water Treatment Plant, Old Philadelphia Pike, for additional sewer capacity for future industrial uses.

He said the expansion would cost about \$2 million but the township cannot set aside current sewer capacity for industrial versus residential uses.

- The board unanimously approved its draft zoning ordinance to rezone 400 to 600 acres on north Limekiln Road from low density residential to a Plan-ned Business/Office/Industrial District zone for the proposed Amity Township Western Industrial Park.

The draft ordinance will be forwarded to the Berks County Planning Commission for review and comments and is expected to be approved by Amity on Dec. 15. It will also be forwarded to the Borough of Birdsboro, the townships of Union, Exeter, St. Lawrence, Oley and to the Daniel Boone School District.

Amity’s next step for AWIP would be to rezone the land, update Berks County’s Vision 2020, and revise its joint comprehensive plan with Exeter and St. Lawrence.