

McGrath to lead Amity township supervisors again

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AMITY — The board of supervisors voted unanimously to reappoint Kimberly J. McGrath as board chairperson for 2014 at its annual reorganization meeting on Jan. 6.

Supervisor Richard L. Gokey was unanimously appointed as vice chairman.

The board welcomed new Supervisor David Hackett, who was elected in November. He fills the seat of former Supervisor Robert R. Yanos, whose term ended Dec. 31.

Mogel Bob Speidel & Kershner was appointed as solicitor for the Zoning Hearing Board.

There is still an opening for an alternate zoning hearing board solicitor.

The vote was also unanimous to appoint George Utter to serve on the zoning board.

All other positions are unchanged.

Following an executive session, the board voted unanimously to increase the administrative staff salary by 3.5 percent.

It also unanimously approved to increase the salary of Public Works Foreman Allistair Howell-Clarke by an additional \$4,000, to \$59,580 for 2014.

The board voted unanimously to approve the Teamsters Local Union 429 Affiliated with the International Brotherhood of Teamsters Joint Council No. 53 three-year contract as presented.

The Teamsters, in their previous two-year contract, effective Jan. 1, 2012, had agreed to receive a twice annual bonus of \$200 in lieu of a salary increase.

Despite a request from Yanos for the board “to do the right thing” and repeal the 2014 budget that has a .00015 fire tax increase, the budget remains unchanged.

McGrath said the township’s 2013 budget surplus is \$385,000 — “in

excess of budget expectations.”

After final 2013 expenses are deducted, Township Manager Charles E. Lyon said the budget surplus will be between \$200,000 and \$225,000. That will increase the township’s reserves from \$2.2 million to \$2.4 million.

The carryovers from 2013 include earned income, \$113,000; real estate transfer money, \$21,000; local service tax money, \$9,000; cable, \$21,000; building permits, \$28,000; violations, \$9,000; snow removal, \$6,000; Heritage escrow, \$18,000; and healthcare dividends, \$143,000, for a total of \$368,000.

“You have the opportunity to do the right thing and not raise taxes,” said Yanos during the public comment period.

He recommended that the board repeal the 2014 budget and lower the general fund millage by the same amount that it had increased the fire tax.

The board adopted on Dec. 4 the 2014 \$3.9 million budget with a .00015 fire tax millage increase.

The township’s millage rate will remain at 1.3 mills and the fire tax will increase from .5 mills to .65 mills for a total millage rate of 1.95.

Taxes will increase \$15 for every \$100,000 of assessed property value.

Supervisor Robert R. Yanos opposed the motion on Nov. 6 to approve the budget and opposed the Dec. 4 motion to adopt.

“Fifty-five to 60 percent of the budget is in reserves,” said Yanos, “Does any business or resident have that in reserves? Why raise taxes when we have \$2.2 million in reserves?”

“How can you have \$2.5 million in reserves and raise taxes?” asked Yanos on Jan. 6. “No one has this, and if they do, I’d like to know who they are. All it takes is three of you to do the right thing.”

No motion was made to repeal the budget.