



**Borough Council- Budget Work Session  
October 23, 2023**

The Budget Work Session Meeting of Souderton Borough Council, held on the above date, was called to order by Council President Tracy W. Burke at 7:00pm.

It was noted that Councilor Stephanie Hall, and Councilor Richard M. Walczak were absent this evening and the following Borough Council and staff were present:

Council President Tracy W. Burke	Mayor Daniel L. Yocum
Council Vice-President Edward M. Huber	Junior Councilor Estrella Sadiboko
Councilor Matthew J. DiNenna	Borough Manager Stacy E. Crandell
Councilor Daryl W. Littlefield	Police Chief Brian A. Newhall
Councilor Donna M. Rogers	Finance Director P. Michael Coll
Councilor Matthew R. Sholly	

Council President Tracy Burke announced that this would be the last meeting of Junior Councilor Estrella Sadiboko as she will be moving out of the Borough. She expressed her appreciation for the position and working with the Borough.

Council President Tracy Burke turned the meeting over to Borough Manager Stacy Crandell. Ms. Crandell gave an update on the Freight House costs and improvements to the building. The Borough is exploring other options for enclosing the patio and waiting on cost estimates. Staff along with Council representatives met with the Solicitor to discuss what was needed to update the lease with the added improvements. The tenant was also notified about the increase in rent and payments for the lease.

Borough Manager Stacy Crandell gave an update regarding an RFQ for the Borough Solicitor. Once notification is given to the current solicitor, the RFQ will be advertised.

Borough Manager Stacy Crandell gave an overview of the draft 2024 Budget with the requests from all the departments. Ms. Crandell turned the meeting over to Police Chief Brian Newhall to discuss the police staffing request for two full-time officers. Chief Newhall explained the need for additional staff due to the increased calls for service and hours worked by the department. The Police Department has made community policing a priority and will attend 45 events in 2023. Chief Newhall explained that compared to similar borough police departments, the Police Department has been understaffed and with the upcoming retirements and other unknown injuries and sickness that can happen at any time, additional staff is needed.

Borough Manager Stacy Crandell explained the need for additional staff in the Administration Department. Ms. Crandell would like replacements for two staff positions, Administrative Assistant to be hired in late 2023 and Finance Director for Spring 2024. In addition, Ms. Crandell is requesting an Operations Manager to help with managing the pool, cemetery, park rentals, and other special project management.

Borough Manager Stacy Crandell discussed some upcoming projects on the horizon like the new Municipal Building and the Public Works Facility. Also, Ms. Crandell explained the need to centralize and streamline the processes and plan so that projects are moving forward to completion. She also explained about the need to plan for road and drainage projects, curb and sidewalk replacements, and alley paving.



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Ms. Crandell went into detail about possible options for the Municipal Building. She also discussed the options for financing this project including utilizing a bond. Ms. Crandell talked about the Public Works Facility options as well. She asked the Council about the future needs of the department to determine where the new facility should be. Staff will begin to look at options at the 2<sup>nd</sup> Street Location.

Ms. Crandell talked about possible uses for the ARPA funds that were going to be used for the police department renovations in the building. She suggested using the funds for doing an accelerated road program. The funds would not cover all the roads remaining, but it would help to formulate the Road Program Schedule. Ms. Crandell also spoke about the need for curb and sidewalk replacement and looking at different options to accomplish this. She also talked about the alley paving process.

Ms. Crandell spoke about some other items that could be funded by the ARPA Funds including a back-up generator for the current building, which can be used for the new building. In addition, some improvements and needs for the Police Department including certain repairs. All the furniture and evidence lockers that are purchased for the Police Department can be used in the future building.

Borough Staff has been looking into other initiatives including digitalizing property files. Ms. Crandell spoke about some cost-saving measures she is looking into including insurance and meeting with current vendors and potential new vendors to evaluate potential savings and streamlining processes going forward.

In addition, Ms. Crandell is proposing a 5% increase in sewer fees. The last increase was in 2017 for the same proposed rate increase. With the costs and potential capital projects in the wastewater treatment plant in the future, she explained that it is important to gradually increase rates to have a healthy capital reserve for the future.

In conclusion, Ms. Crandell explained that everything that was presented and requested for the 2024 Budget was helping the Borough to move forward and help plan for the future. She explained that while it is not easy to discuss tax increases, it is needed for the Borough to keep moving forward and provide services to the community.

The Council members expressed their appreciation for the detailed information provided by the Borough Manager and the Police Chief. Council President Tracy Burke asked council members what their thoughts were. Collectively, the Council and Mayor understood the needs and the requests for the budget increases. There was a discussion about the need to make sure the Borough is building up the Capital Reserves Fund. Council President Tracy Burke asked for consensus on what the size of the increase should be. It was decided to authorize the advertisement of the 2024 Draft Budget with 2.5 mills increase at the November 6<sup>th</sup> Council Meeting.

There being no further business, the meeting adjourned at 9:29PM.

Respectfully submitted,

*Stacy E. Crandell*

Stacy E. Crandell, Secretary