

RIDGWAY BOROUGH BUDGET MEETING #2
Ridgway Municipal Building
108 Main Street, Ridgway, PA 15853
October 30, 2024

The budget development meeting of the Ridgway Borough Council was called to order by Steve Caggese at 4:30 p.m. on Wednesday, October 30 at the Ridgway Municipal Building.

PRESENT: Council members Steve Caggese, Zack Pontious, Chris Matheson, Steve Lawrie, and Brent Kemmer. Also in attendance was Borough Manager Mike Handley, Mayor Ray Imhof, Officer in Charge Justin Bolden, and Recording Secretary Jake Mercer.

ABSENT: Councilwoman Abbi Peters and Councilman Ron Burkett.

Councilman Caggese shared with Council that the water and sewer fund meeting will be held on November 6 at 4:30 p.m. and additional meetings will be scheduled if needed.

Recreation Fund

Borough Manager Mike Handley reviewed the recreation fund with Council. Handley said that their pump, motor and control panel needs to be replaced, and they are all in critical condition. Handley said this will cost about \$12,000 but \$15,000 will be earmarked for any unknowns that arise, and it will need to be added to the budget. The council agreed to include it within the budget.

Handley said that the plan is to install the community splash pad in the spring and the contract has been awarded to Steger Masonry to do the work. He noted that the majority of the funding came from grants and community contributions led by Mary Lynn Bellotti of the YMCA.

Handley requested that the Council allocates \$10,000 from truck industrial waste to be transferred to the recreation fund due to the fund only having \$17,000 in it. This fund is always underfunded as the millage is set below what is required to operate the pool and to maintain the parks. He said they need to purchase mulch and a few other items. It was also noted that chemical usage at the swimming pool was \$6,000 higher than expected and ended up costing \$14,000 in 2024. Handley has added the pool chemicals to the 2025 bid sheets to get a competitive cost. He said they are still within budget in the recreation fund.

Councilman Pontious made a motion to allocate \$10,000 from trucked industrial waste to the recreation fund. Councilman Matheson seconded the motion and it was approved by the following vote:

Councilman Caggese: Aye

Councilman Pontious: Aye

Councilman Matheson: Aye

Councilman Kemmer: Aye

Councilman Lawrie: Aye

Refuse Fund

Handley said electrical uses are down, especially with street lighting and there could be an estimated cost savings of \$27,000. Handley said these potential savings could be reallocated to the recreation fund or other funds if the Council chooses.

Handley said new finance software and asset management will initially cost \$30,000 but he said they can spread that cost throughout all departments. He said they will increase the refuse fund by \$3,000 and the other \$27,000 would be spread through the other funds.

General Fund

Handley said Berkheimer is expected to receive \$610,000 in earned income taxes this year. He said community employee wage increases are the primary reason, and our collection for these taxes should increase as well.

Following up with the request of Council, the Solicitor and Handley have discussed potentially increasing the costs for the fees for certain amusement devices. It was reported there are 22 amusement devices licensed within the Borough at for-profit businesses. He said the skill machines within the Borough for non-profit businesses may be exempt from the increased fee in Council so chooses. He said that the current fee for all businesses is currently set at \$60 per machine per year.

Council had lengthy discussions over skill machines relating to for-profit businesses and non-profit businesses.

Councilman Caggese made a motion to increase the fee for skill machines from \$500 to \$1,000 for for-profit businesses and \$100 for non-profit businesses. Councilman Matheson seconded the motion and it was approved by the following vote:

Councilman Caggese: Aye

Councilman Pontious: Aye

Councilman Matheson: Aye

Councilman Kemmer: Aye

Councilman Lawrie: Aye

Handley said they could have a general fund income increase of \$11,000 from the for-profit businesses if the fee was set at \$500 per machine. He said these monies will be allocated towards other expenditures as determined by the Council.

Handley said that they have significantly decreased the use and dependability on truck industrial waste. He said that in the past an upwards of \$400,000 was accounted for truck industrial waste to cover underfunded costs and is now down to about \$200,000 for 2025.

Handley and Officer in Charge Bolden reported on the proposed police budget. The Ridgway Borough Police Department has a proposed \$1.1 million budget for 2025 and accounts for 47% of the general fund. The proposed total amount of monies in the general fund for 2025 stands at around \$2.3 million budget. This percentage will increase if a school resource officer is hired. It was noted that a good portion of the

police department budget accounts for new vehicles they acquire, officer training, and equipment needs for the officers. It is a common practice of the Borough to replace a police vehicle every two years and there was a lengthy discussion held about the status of the vehicles and allocated police monies, especially when it came to what the police department does with impounded vehicles.

Regarding the school resource officer situation between the Ridgway Borough and the Ridgway Area School District. Handley said the District has two years of guaranteed funding. It was requested that the Borough have a four-year agreement due to them potentially dissolving the position in the future. The school resource officer would work school hours for 176 days, and the school district would cover 68% of the costs and the Borough would cover 32% of the costs. Handley said this individual would be a Borough employee and would be like the intergovernmental agreement position for the Code Enforcement Officer.

The status of this position will be discussed in the next Ridgway Area School District school board meeting. The Borough plans to go forward with these efforts.

After no further discussion was had, the meeting adjourned at 6:57 p.m.