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News from the Montgomery Township Board of Supervisors

February 2004

Supervisors Cut Property Tax

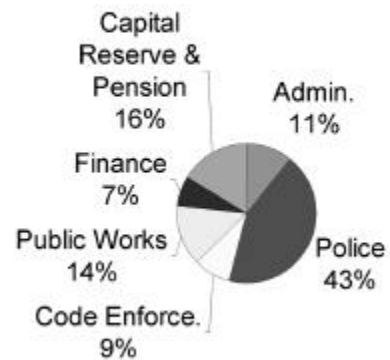
The Township's 2004 budget is highlighted by a further reduction in property taxes and an increase in the Homestead Exclusion.

The \$10.2 million budget reflects a two-year cumulative property tax millage reduction of 6 percent. The Township's portion of a taxpayer's real estate tax bill has historically been the lowest of the three taxing entities (Township, Montgomery County and North Penn School District). In addition to the property tax reduction, the residential Homestead Exclusion will rise.

The Township's operating and capital budgets were adopted in December. The budgets follow the fiscal responsibility guidelines and prudent management set forth by the Board of Supervisors. The budget also continues to create an equitable tax structure in relation to taxes paid and services received by taxpayers.

The Supervisors approved an increase in the Homestead Exclusion to \$15,000 from \$10,000. Households that were approved previously will see this reduction reflected in their 2004 tax bill. Residents who have not applied are urged to do so before March 1. Residents approved in this application cycle will see the savings in their 2005 tax bill. Applications can be picked up at the Township Building or at www.montgomerytwp.org and should be returned to Montgomery County. Residents who are unsure if they have been approved can check the Township's Web site for a record of approved properties by parcel number. Residents do not have to reapply every year

2004 General Fund Expense Categories



unless moving to a new property within the Township.

In conjunction with the Township's five-year plan, the 2004 budget reflects a designated surplus of \$800,000. Among the designations for the surplus are the 2004 road plan, the Fire Department and the purchase of open space through the County's Open Space Grant Program. The Township will also maintain a "rainy day" balance in the Capital Reserve Fund.

Personnel-related expenses are the largest portion of the Township's operating expenses. Employee benefit expenses will again face a 15 percent increase in medical insurance this year. The Police Department accounts for just over 40 percent of Township expenses, followed by Public Works, Administration, Code Enforcement and Finance (see graph above).

The largest revenue source is the mercantile tax, generating approximately 32 percent of

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INSIDE THIS ISSUE:



GRANT
SUCCESS



STAYING
CONNECTED



CHAIRMAN'S
MESSAGE



NEW
OFFICERS

Township Doubles Goal for 2003 Grant Funding

In 2002, the Supervisors estimated that 2 percent of 2003 revenues would be from grant money. One year later, the Township can proudly announce that it surpassed expectations and more than doubled the expected revenue from grants.

In total, more than 4 percent, or \$378,000, of 2003's annual revenue came from grants.

The Fire Department of Montgomery Township brought in \$100,000 in grants over the last year. The grant money will be used to purchase equipment for the firehouse.

The Police Department was awarded over \$150,000 in grants. The Department received \$34,000 from a DUI Grant and almost \$10,000 from a D.A.R.E. Grant. The Department also received \$100,653 from the Office of Community Orientated Policing Services (COPS) for the purchase

of mobile data computers.

Several Township boards and committees received grants in 2003. The Shade Tree Commission received \$3,500 from the Pennsylvania Urban and Community Forestry Council. The Environmental Advisory Committee was awarded a total of \$92,000 in grants from the State Department of Environmental Protection.

With the passing of the 2004 budget, the Board has set a goal of generating at least 3 percent of the Township's total revenue in grant money.

Residents will be able to track the progress of Township staff through a chart to be placed in the lobby of the Township Building. The "Grant-O-Meter" will track grant money received throughout 2004 and reflect the ongoing efforts of the Board, staff, and committee members.

Transportation Survey Planned

The Board of Supervisors is teaming up with the Partnership Transportation Management Association (PTMA) to address strategies to improve the flow of vehicles and make non-driving transportation options available to residents.

The PTMA works with public and private organizations to develop, support, promote and improve new and existing transportation systems in the region. The Township requested that the PTMA survey residents in several neighborhoods in order to assess the possible need for a municipal shuttle in the area.

"We want the PTMA to help us determine if public transportation can serve our Township efficiently and effectively, with minimal use of resources," said John Nagel, Township Manager. "The survey can give us a look at the transportation needs in the Township and where we should head."

For more information on the PTMA events, such as the R5 Rail Line or mobile job fair, call 215 699-2733 or visit www.ptma-mc.org.

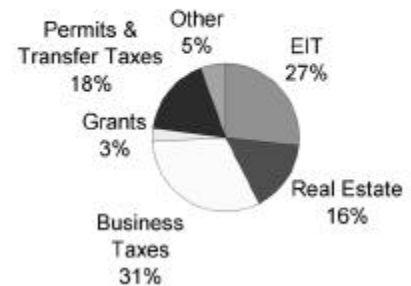
Budget continued from page 1

the revenue (see graph page 2). In 2004, real estate tax collections are expected to produce 16 percent of revenue. The Board and staff have set a goal of generating at least 3 percent of total revenue, or more than \$300,000, in grant monies (see related story above). This budget also predicts a higher collection rate for the earned income tax (EIT). The EIT was initiated in 2003, following the North Penn School District's 2002 enactment. The EIT collects over \$1 million that residents were paying to other towns, which is now used in the Township.

The Township's current stable financial situation and well-managed reserves have resulted in an Aa2 financial rating from internationally recognized Moody's

Financial Services. The Aa2 designation is one of Moody's highest financial rankings. This designation follows the recent "unqualified" opinion the Township received in its annual 2002 audit, signifying that the Township is in sound financial condition.

2004 General Fund Revenue Categories



Board Helps Residents Stay Connected



Thanks to the Board of Supervisors, residents who do not have access to basic computer programs or the Internet will still have access to the Township Web site.

To enhance communication efforts, the Supervisors arranged for a computer kiosk in the lobby of the Township Building. Lizell Office Furniture on Route 309 donated the kiosk.

"The goal of this project is to provide residents without Internet access the same information as those who do have access," said John Nagel, Township Manager. "With the support of the Board of Supervisors and Lizell Office Furniture, this project helps connect all residents."

The kiosk includes a television displaying cable channel 22, the Township's bulletin board. In addition to the computer, newsletters, press releases, Township maps and general information important to residents are available at the kiosk.

The Public Information Office supervises the kiosk. Residents are invited to use the computer Monday through Friday, from 9:15 am to 4:45 pm. The computer will not be accessible on Township holidays.

Businesses Must Register with Tax Office

The Township's Business Tax Office reminds all Township businesses that they must register with the office. Businesses are required to obtain an annual business license and file a tax return reporting and paying tax on gross receipts. The due date for obtaining a 2004 Business License and filing a 2004 Business Privilege and Mercantile Tax Return is March 15, 2004.

This requirement applies to anyone operating a business from their home and anyone who owns and leases property in the Township. If you need to register your business or need additional information, please contact the Business Tax Office at 215-393-6910.

Supervisors Thank Township Volunteers



Stephen Prousi
Chairman

At its first meeting of 2004, the Board recognized the 68 volunteers who serve on the 11 Township Boards and Commissions. Please join us in thanking these men and women who volunteer their time and expertise to make the Township a great place to live. If you are interested in serving as a volunteer, please contact the Township Building at 215-393-6900.

The Board would like to remind all residents who have not applied for the Homestead Exclusion to do so prior to March 1. If approved, you will receive a \$15,000 reduction in your property's 2005 assessed value when your local property taxes are calculated.

The Supervisors are proud of the new kiosk at the Township Building. The workstation makes the Township Web site available to those without Internet service. Interesting and important information is presented on the site and the Supervisors want all residents to be able to view the contents.

Thank you for your interest in our Township.

Become A Member of the Township Team

The Township is accepting applications for temporary summer employment as camp counselors and senior camp counselors in the Kid's University Camp, a six-week program operating Monday through Thursday. Camp counselors assist in camp activities. Related experience is preferred and applicants must be at least 16 years old. Senior counselors lead camp activities and supervise programs and participants. Related experience is required.

The Township is also hiring temporary summer outdoor laborers to maintain Township grounds, roads and perform other public works duties. Laborers work Monday to Friday from 7:30 a.m. to 3:30 p.m. and must be at least 18 years of age.

Applications can be obtained at the Township Building or at www.montgomerytwp.org. Montgomery Township is an Equal Opportunity Employer.



1001 Stump Road
Montgomeryville, PA 18936

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Montgomeryville,
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18936

Your Award-Winning Communications Community

Police Department Adds Two Officers

The Township welcomed two new police officers to the community in January, including the Township's first female officer.

Maria Bess, 23, of Perkasie, has previously worked as a police dispatcher for the Hatfield Township and Upper Gwynedd Township Police Departments. She is presently pursuing an Associate Degree in Criminal Justice from Montgomery County Community College. Officer Bess is the first female member of the Township's 33-person police force.

Christopher Jacobs, 24, of Towamencin Township, obtained his Bachelor of Science in Criminal Justice from Penn State University



Officer Maria Bess and Officer Christopher Jacobs are welcomed to the Township family by Supervisor Chairman Stephen Prousi.

and recently completed his Police Officers' Training Certification. Officer Jacobs will begin his field training under the supervision of Officer William Peoples and Canine Officer Gerald Dougherty.

"I am confident that the new recruits

will uphold the mission of the Police Department," said Police Chief Richard Brady. "The officers will help promote, protect, and deliver a feeling of security and safety to members of the residential, commercial and industrial community."

The Department's hiring process began in February 2003 with competitive testing of more than 100 applicants. The selection process consisted of a written examination, physical agility test, police oral interview, background investigation, drug testing, polygraph examination, public safety committee interview, psychological examination, physical examination, and an interview with the Board of Supervisors.