

COUNTY OFFICE

August 18, 2025

The meeting was called to order about 11:50 a.m. Trustees Port and Hare were present. The Fiscal Officer was also present.

Trustee Mueller was absent.

A staff member from the Auditor's office read the estimated starting balances for the 2026 budget.

Budget Commission member Pam McMahon advised the Board of her experience on the Board of Revisions hearing from residents who are distressed over high property taxes.

Budget commission members Jim Flaiz and Chris Hitchcock went right into the Police funds and the potential revenue from the levy that will be on the ballot for November 2025. The Budget Commission questioned the Board on the levy purpose, due to doubling the revenue for the Police Department. Trustee Port cited the Miller Dodson reserve study funding recommendations, and the specialized training required. Trustee Hare explained that the Police department needed additional funding to meet the cash carry over needs for the next five years. Chief Swaidner confirmed that a five-year projection was utilized and noted it has been 8 years since the last Police levy. Fiscal Officer Walder reviewed the parameters the Board requested in determining the Levy amount.

The Budget Commission questioned the Board as to why the Levy was continuing, not just five years and why the Board didn't use the increase in inside millage in the General Fund due to reappraisal to supplement the Police funds. Trustee Port noted that the Board has returned portions of the inside millage windfall for the past two years and that for 2026, the Board was using the inside millage increase to assist the Fire Department.

The Budget Commission showed a power point of Russell having the highest tax collection for their Police and asked why they needed more funding. The Budget Commission focused on the new Detective position, and the County Prosecutor told the Trustees that that would be a luxury that the township doesn't need. The County Treasurer stated that the levy amount was overly generous, and if the levy passed, he would not collect the full amount from the taxpayers.

The Budget Commission had many issues with the Police budget, and moved to continue the hearing on August 27th at 10:00 a.m. as they wouldn't pass this budget as currently submitted, due to negative funding for the added personnel in the Police Department.

Mr. Hare made the motion to adjourn, and Ms. Port seconded, and the motion passed.

The meeting adjourned at 12:32 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Kristina Port, Chair

Karen Walder, Fiscal Officer