

Board of Supervisors Capital Planning Meeting

Monday, October 13, 2025 | 6:00 p.m. |

1) Call to Order, Pledge of Allegiance, and Roll Call.

Supervisor Mike Ksiazek called the meeting to order at 6:03 p.m. and led the Pledge of Allegiance.

Supervisors Ksiazek, Hannah, Quirple, and Kane attended the meeting. Also present were Township Manager Eden Ratliff, Assistant Township Manager Nick Valla, Finance Director Laura Hucklebridge, Director of Parks & Recreation Paul Kopera, Director of Building & Zoning Jim Ennis, Chief of Police Joseph Bartorilla, Police Lieutenant Zachary Brosius, Police Lieutenant Aileen Parker, Director of Public Works Eric Gartenmayer, Assistant Parks & Recreation Director Patrick Graham, Fire Marshal Alan Welsh, IT Manager Chad Megeed, Accountant Mary Hendershot, Acting Public Information Officer Nicole Tener, and Executive Assistant Miranda Colon

2) Introduction.

Township Manager Ratliff introduced the third formal budget workshop for the development of the 2026 Budget. Tonight's workshop focused on the operating budget and add/delete requests submitted by department heads.

Mr. Ratliff emphasized that this meeting was intended to facilitate discussion and gather feedback from the Board and public regarding departmental operating requests. The proposed budget will be developed based on input received throughout this process.

3) 2026 Budget Process

Mr. Ratliff reviewed the 2025 financial outlook, noting that the average Middletown Township resident's real estate tax payment to the Township is approximately \$560 annually, with the remainder of the total property tax bill going to the County and School District. The Township's current deficit is approximately \$2 million, improved from the originally projected \$2.8 million due to favorable year-end projections.

Mr. Valla outlined two recommended adjustments from the adopted 2025 budget; both related to the Stormwater Fund. Staff reviewed ongoing efforts to create structural balance between Township funds. Projected cost increases for 2026 include 4% wage adjustments across collective bargaining units, a 6.6% increase in health insurance premiums, and a 13% increase in workers' compensation. Pension costs will vary slightly by plan. Based on these assumptions, the Township is projecting a 2026 General Fund deficit of approximately \$3.7 million if no new revenues or service reductions are adopted.

Department fund summaries were presented for the Stormwater, Parks and Recreation, and Fire Funds, each facing ongoing structural deficits despite stable operations. Staff emphasized the goal of achieving long-term fiscal balance while maintaining service levels.

Proposed Changes-

a) Software Updates-

Mr. Ratliff introduced the discussion on recommended software upgrades, emphasizing that the items presented were not formal budget proposals but opportunities for Board feedback.

Chief Bartorilla discussed the current RMS is over 10 years old and no longer integrates efficiently with body camera and evidence management systems. The proposed new RMS would significantly improve searchability, reporting accuracy, and workflow for officers and administrative staff.

The Finance Department is facing similar limitations with its current system, which requires manual data entry and lacks integration with other programs. The proposed modernization would replace the current system with a comprehensive financial management platform capable of automating journal entries, integrating payment processing, tracking assets, and providing greater transparency.

b) Stormwater Maintenance

Mr. Valla discussed the condition of the Township's stormwater system. He proposed adding five Public Works maintenance employees primarily dedicated to stormwater work. The estimated cost is \$750,000, with roughly two-thirds to be paid from the Stormwater Fund. Mr. Ratliff noted this would not increase the stormwater fee but would allow the Township to perform more maintenance in-house and reduce project costs over time. Board members discussed the need to show measurable cost savings from insourcing.

c) Staff Engineer Proposal

A proposal was made to hire a Township Staff Engineer at a cost of approximately \$200,000 annually. The position would not handle land development reviews but would reduce external engineering costs for Township projects and provide internal design assistance to departments. Board members emphasized the need for clear return on investment and potential liability considerations.

d) Fire Department Staffing

Mr. Ratliff recommended creating a Fire Lieutenant position at an estimated \$158,000 all-in cost.

The lieutenant would provide consistent leadership on the weekday career engine, enhance safety, and improve accountability within the inspection program.

e) Volunteer Firefighter Incentives

Mr. Ratliff outlined a proposal to support volunteer firefighter retention, noting approximately 40 active volunteer's township-wide, with about 10 per company meeting the 25% call-response requirement.

f) IT and Staff Training

Mr. Valla proposed providing formal Microsoft 365 and Teams training for Township employees to improve efficiency and maximize use of new cloud-based systems.

g) Zoning and SALDO Update

Planning and Zoning recommended a comprehensive review of the Zoning Ordinance and Subdivision & Land Development Ordinance (SALDO) at a combined cost of approximately \$150,000. The update would ensure consistency with the Township's Comprehensive Plan, streamline the development process, and reduce the number of zoning variances sought by residents.

The summary of recommended changes totaled \$1,263,000.

4) Public Comment

Mr. Bill Dillinger, President of Parkland Fire Company, addressed the Board. He described financial challenges facing volunteer departments and requested consideration of a millage increase to stabilize funding. Mr. Ratliff and Supervisors thanked him for his service and acknowledged the importance of sustaining volunteer fire companies.

5) Other Business

Mr. Ksiazek stated that while Middletown has not raised taxes since 2015, that approach is no longer sustainable given increasing costs and service expectations. He emphasized maintaining current service levels and thanked staff for their extensive work on the budget. Supervisors Hannah and Kane thanked staff for their transparency and creativity in developing solutions, agreeing that public safety and service quality must remain priorities. All Supervisors expressed appreciation to Township staff, including the Finance Department and administrative team, for the countless hours invested in budget preparation.

Mr. Ratliff advised of upcoming meetings

- Monday, October 20, 2025, 6:00 p.m. – Capital Projects Workshop
- Monday, November 17, 2025, 7:00 p.m. – Presentation of the Proposed 2026 Draft Budget
- Monday, December 15, 2025, 7:00 p.m. – Budget Adoption

6) Adjournment.

Supervisor Ksiazek moved to adjourn the meeting. The meeting was adjourned at 7:19 p.m.