

**BOROUGH OF GREEN TREE  
COUNCIL MEETING  
NOVEMBER 16, 2009**

**Call to Order / Pledge of Allegiance**

Green Tree Borough Council met on Monday, November 23, 2009 at 7:30 p.m. at the Green Tree Municipal Center, 10 West Manilla Avenue, Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania.

**Roll Call**

**Members Present:**

Mark Sampogna, President  
Daniel Behanna  
Paul Kirsch  
Janine Palmer  
Ron Panza  
Edward Schenck  
Arthur Tintori

**Also Present:**

W. David Montz, Borough Manager  
Louis A. Casadei, Borough Engineer  
Andrew Lisiecki, Chief of Police  
Kary Rahner, Public Works Director  
Babette K. Legler, Finance Director  
Deborah N. Gawryla, Stenographer

**Absent:**

Vincent J. Abbato, Mayor

**REPORT OF BOROUGH COUNCIL COMMITTEES**

**A. STREETS & PUBLIC HEALTH - Dr. Kirsch**

**1. Resolution #1125**

**Winter Services Agreement with the State of Pennsylvania**

**Motion:**

**Dr. Kirsch made a motion, seconded by Ms. Palmer, to adopt Resolution #1125, the winter services agreement with PennDOT.**

Mr. Montz read Resolution #1125 by title only.

**Roll Call Vote**

<b>Dr. Kirsch</b>	<b>Yes</b>
<b>Mr. Behanna</b>	<b>Yes</b>
<b>Mr. Schenck</b>	<b>Yes</b>
<b>Mr. Tintori</b>	<b>Yes</b>
<b>Mr. Panza</b>	<b>Yes</b>
<b>Ms. Palmer</b>	<b>Yes</b>
<b>Mr. Sampogna</b>	<b>Yes</b>

**Motion carried unanimously.**

**B. FINANCE - Mr. Behanna**

**1. Amendment to 2009 budget, as requested by the Borough Manager, for the purchase of firearms for the Police Department.**

**Motion:**

**Mr. Behanna made a motion, seconded by Dr. Kirsch, to amend the 2009 budget for the purchase of firearms by the Police Department.**

Mr. Montz stated that Chief Lisiecki had noted that one of the department's shotguns did not have a proper barrel on it and it needed to be replaced. Additionally, two other shotguns had malfunctioned during firearms training and were repaired, but it was noted that these shotguns had been in the department for many years and should also be replaced. There were additional funds that had not been used during the fiscal year for the purchase of a police car. These funds will be moved from this fund to the Capital Fund to replace four shotguns for the Police Department. Mr. Schenck stated that the purchase of the unmarked police car had left \$4,552 remaining in that fund and those are the funds that will be transferred for the purchase of the shotguns.

**Motion carried unanimously.**

### **2010 BUDGET PRESENTATION BY THE BOROUGH MANAGER**

Mr. Montz said that he is not proposing an increase in the real estate taxes for 2010 and this marks the ninth year that there have been no increases in real estate taxes. There are approximately 600 businesses in Green Tree that pay business privilege tax, which contributes largely to the tax base of the Borough. Thanks to the foresight of this Council and previous Councils through the establishment of escrow funds and other proactive budget plans, Green Tree remains financially healthy.

Debt was increased by \$1.5 million with the mandated sewer project bond issue, but debt was also lessened at the same time by paying off two fire trucks in advance.

*The following budget items were discussed during the review of the proposed 2010 budget.*

### **REVENUES**

Mr. Montz said that the real estate tax collection is projected to remain the same. The establishment of the escrow fund for real estate tax appeals has given the Borough financial stability. The collection rate of real estate tax is excellent and he encouraged Council to continue having garbage collection paid as part of the real estate taxes. This prevents the Borough from having problems with those who might not pay a separate garbage fee. It also allows Borough homeowners with mortgages to actually deduct this fee since it is included in the real estate taxes they pay.

Mr. Montz noted that the Police Department has help to increase the amounts in both vendor permits and citations with increased enforcement. Mr. Montz reviewed the details of the revenues listed in the budget.

### **EXPENDITURES**

#### **Borough Council and Mayor**

Mr. Montz said that funds are available for conferences and seminars to keep officials aware of ways to keep their municipality healthy and possibly learn new ways to improve the community and save money. He encouraged Council to attend meetings to get new ideas to move Green Tree forward and stay ahead of the curve.

#### **Executive (Administration)**

Mr. Montz said the workers' compensation has worked out well for the Borough and the employees do not abuse it. He would like to pursue other avenues to save money on required legal advertising.

**Tax Collection**

Mr. Montz noted that the new collection system for earned income taxes will go into effect in two years. Many of the meetings for establishing the procedures for the new collection system will take place in Green Tree because of its central location. The new collection system will require a new governmental agency. By-laws will have to be written and adopted.

**Legal Services**

There will be an increase in the Solicitor's legal fees in 2010.

**Police Department**

Mr. Montz noted that Court Pay will increase by \$12,000 in 2010. Several years ago there had been discussions regarding the amount of overtime in the Police Department. Since then, overtime has been tracked to determine the various ways it is accumulated with court pay being one of the overtime costs. He reviewed and defined the various budget lines in the Police Department budget.

**Fire Protection**

Mr. Montz expressed gratitude that the Borough helps fund its fire protection services so the firefighters can spend more time on training techniques and less time on fund raising. Mr. Montz noted that MRTSA's budget, which had had a deficit in previous years, is now showing a surplus of approximately \$30,000.

**Planning/Zoning/Code Enforcement**

Mr. Montz noted that the funds in the Emergency Management Plan had helped the Police Department in 2009 with necessary preparations for security for the G20 Summit. It allowed the department to purchase riot helmets, gas masks and barricades. He said that the barricades will be used for a number of things in the future. Plans are underway to upgrade the Borough's Emergency Plan and have emergency management drills in 2010.

**Garbage Collection**

Garbage collection continues to be paid for as part of residents' real estate taxes. The recycling collection bins near the fire hall and pool have been a success and they are full every week. The bins are now collecting more than the door-to-door recycling collection did several years ago and costs much less. The leaf collection program is very successful and he commended Public Works for their efforts while noting that some other communities do not provide this service and others require residents to bag and transport their leaves to a central collection site. When asked, Mr. Montz said he would provide Council with a man-hour cost for leaf collection.

**Sewer Maintenance**

Mr. Montz said that the amount in Sanitary Sewer Maintenance is higher than what is actually spent because Alcosan requires the Borough to budget 120% of what the estimated costs will be and it must be shown that it is available. Mr. Montz defined the individual sewer maintenance costs.

**Recreation**

Mr. Montz said that for a small municipality, Green Tree offers its residents plenty of recreational opportunities. In 2010, plans are underway for a new basketball program, a flag football league, a seniors' picnic, seniors' recreation including Wii bowling, and more.

The Special Activities funds are for Green Tree's 125th Anniversary Celebration plans in 2010.

**Library**

Mr. Montz said that the Borough auditors have requested that the library funding be part of the Borough's audit. Discussion took place regarding the possible cuts in library funding from ACLA as part of their revised formula for distribution and various ways these proposed cuts might be addressed without cuts in library services. He said one of the possibilities was to purchase fewer books because of the library's interlibrary sharing program and noted that approximately 50% of the library's patrons are non-residents.

Mr. Schenck asked what the library's reserve fund amount was. Mr. Montz replied that he would find out and provide this information to Council. Discussion took place regarding the history of the library.

**Intergovernmental Expenditures**

Mr. Panza asked if the Borough is benefitting from the COG. Mr. Montz said the Borough has benefitted through the purchase of rock salt. Mr. Sampogna said that the negotiation of the Verizon franchise agreement and the renegotiation of the Comcast agreement was done through the COG. The COG was also instrumental in obtaining the handicapped access doors for the Municipal Center. Mr. Sampogna said that the COG has also made the Borough aware of a number of multi-municipal programs and grants.

**SPECIAL FUNDS****Storm Sewer Fund**

Mr. Montz said that work on the creek had been done with monies from this fund. It will also be important when development at Parkway Center takes place. There are some erosion problems throughout the Borough where this fund is also utilized.

**Sanitary Sewer Funds**

Mr. Montz estimated that Alcosan fees will increase by about 7% next year and they will increase by 5% to 8% every year for the next few years. He recommended that Council take a tour of Alcosan during their annual open house to see what they do. Mr. Montz said that Green Tree's surcharge will have to be increased during the second quarter of 2010.

**2002/2009 Sanitary Sewer Bond Fund**

Mr. Casadei detailed the work being done on the sewers as part of the mandate. Mr. Montz said that the Public Works Department is working on correcting the drain on the swimming pool so that it will drain to the stormwater system when it is empty and to the sanitary sewer system when it is in use during the summer months.

**CAPITAL PROJECTS FUND**

Some projects falling under the Capital Projects Fund include:

- Renovations to the Police Department.
- Codification of the Borough's Code on the website.
- Comprehensive Plan.
- Aiken Soccer Field.
- Directional signage.
- Tree plantings throughout the Borough with a possible buffer between Rook and the railyard.
- Green Tree Streetscape Project between Manilla and Pocono.
- Video surveillance.
- Wilson Shelter improvements.
- Resurfacing of Wilson tennis and basketball courts.
- Painting of Greentree Road traffic poles.

**Solid Waste Collection Fund**

Mr. Montz said that it would cost a household approximately \$98 a year for garbage collection plus administrative fees. Instead the Borough covers the cost of this service through real estate taxes.

**Reserve Fund**

Mr. Montz referred to the Reserve Fund as the Borough's "rainy day fund." The banks recommend that the Reserve Fund should hold approximately 5% to 10% of the entire budget and Green Tree's Reserve Fund is in the middle of that estimate.

Mr. Montz said that the Borough's improved bond rating was due in part to the various funds clearly showing where the monies were being spent.

**Comments**

Mr. Schenck asked what percentage of business privilege taxes, earned income taxes and real estate taxes are delinquent and how much money those delinquencies translate into. He asked Mr. Montz to find out these numbers as well as what procedures are followed to collect these delinquent taxes. Mr. Montz said that delinquent real estate taxes would be the easiest to track, business privilege taxes would also be somewhat easy to determine, while delinquent earned income tax might be the hardest. He would review the numbers and provide Council with these sums and the procedures that are followed to collect these taxes.

Mr. Montz said that when the new earned income tax collection system is put into effect, it might be difficult to determine where the specific taxes are coming from and to make certain that they are going to the correct community. Discussion continued regarding various problems that might result from the new collection system.

**ADJOURNMENT**

**Motion:**

**Mr. Schenck made a motion, seconded by Mr. Behanna, to adjourn the meeting at 9:30 p.m.**

**Motion carried unanimously.**

---

Mark Sampogna, President

---

W. David Montz, Manager