BOS BUDGET MINUTES

Dickinson Township Budget

October 20, 2026, Dickinson Township Meeting Room
5:00 pm

Attendance

Board Members:
Chairman Rob Kole, Vice Chairperson Jennifer DeGaetano, Supervisor Robert "Bob" Line III

Absent: None

Staff:
Manager Lovett, Township Manager, Nate Bragunier, Public Works Director, Grace Hogue, Secretary Treasurer,
Matthew Boyer, Solicitor

Visitors: *Charley Westcott – Emergency Management Administrator*
Barry Shughart – Emergency Management Coordinator
Jeff Staub – Citizen's Fire Company Chief

Call to Order
Chairman Kole called the meeting to order at 5:00 pm.

Agenda Approval

A motion was made by Vice Chairperson DeGaetano and seconded by Supervisor Line and unanimously passed to approve the agenda for the October 20, 2026 meeting.

Public Comment – Agenda Items Only

Jeff Staub – Citizen's Fire Company Chief – presented Citizen's Fire Company budget and requests for funds for 2027. He referenced the tour of the station which helped explain the fire company's position. There was a decision to increase payroll over the replacement of the one engine. He explained the increase in hourly wage and how it would be funded per call volume through municipalities. The numbers provided is not requested in full, however it's a goal to work towards. Chief Staub presented numbers and how the percentages have been chosen towards this goal. Chairman Kole clarified how the split between municipalities was chosen according to call volume. Chief Staub continued to provide numbers and where the company was in deficit last year. He specified the large amounts items that has been apart of these needs for increasing including: fire gear, fire rigs, internet, and other larger items. The company is looking into different ways to streamline the money to see how things can be adjusted to save money. Chief Staub also explained the how the fundraising has been helping somewhat, but still a struggle due to the shortage of volunteers.

Manager Lovett shared Mt. Holly Borough has decided to join us in the Fire & EMS study, which will be beneficial in assisting the emergency services companies in multiple areas.

Jill Lovett reported that Carlisle Borough had agreed to join Dickinson Township and Mount Holly Springs in developing a multi-municipal fire and EMS infrastructure strategy. Chairman Kole noted that participation by three municipalities provided the starting group contemplated in the Rob Brady study. He discussed first developing a funding strategy and working document, followed by additional participation and broader collaboration.

Presentation/Discussion of 2027 Budget/Capital Plan Items

a. Highlights of Operational Expense Changes

Manager Lovett presented the rough draft for the 2027 budget and highlighted the changes for next year. The possible changes included an increase in medical benefits and wages. She also highlighted the employment vacancies which will remain in 2027 budget. She stated the changing in banking institutions from last year increased the revenue from the interest differences.

b. Draft Fund Overview (Revenues / Expenses Totals)

Manager Lovett gave an overview of what each fund is for. She proceeded to present how revenue and expenses compare, as well as changes to funds. All the changes have been incorporated into each fund, including grants that are expected. The one grant for Stuart Park is the Greenways Trails. Some of the large amounts paid from grants will be paid out of General Fund, so it won't be pulled out of multiple funds. Supervisor Line asked about the larger amount in the engineering account. Manager Lovett clarified this was for the engineering fees for the projects for Lindenwood Park.

c. Capital Plan 2026 – 2030 Discussion

Jill Lovett reviewed the preliminary 2027–2031 capital plan. She explained that the capital reserve report did not yet include five-year projections; those would be developed after the board's discussion established the projects and timing to be reflected in the plan.

The Township would seek up to approximately $200,000 in county funding for the Alexander Spring Road bridge, with the township paying the balance. Engineering had been completed in conjunction with the Cold Spring Road bridge project, leaving bidding as the next step. Jill Lovett had provided project information to Kirk Stoner at the county regarding potentially available small-bridge funding. Chairman Kole asked whether the project could be delayed if funding was unavailable, and Jill Lovett confirmed that it could. Staff would also explore HATS and multimodal grants for reconstruction of Alexander Spring Road on both sides of Burnt House Road, including potential connections for people walking and bicycling to the warehousing district. Nate Bragunier reported that the Cold Spring Road culvert installation was scheduled for the following day and that the project was progressing ahead of the anticipated three-week schedule, with favorable resident feedback.

The 2027 road maintenance allotment included chip and seal for roads that had received FB modification in 2026, as well as North Dickinson School Road. The approved 2003 Freightliner replacement carried forward to 2027 because the truck had not yet been ordered and payment was expected the following year. Staff recommended against renewing the ground weather rods' three-year contract after its final year in 2027. Nate Bragunier reported that the system had provided inaccurate indications of icy and dry road conditions. The

board requested review for possible early termination, and Matthew Boyer mentioned he will look at the agreement to see if this is possible.

Nate Bragunier presented the request in purchasing a mini excavator, explaining that its smaller footprint would allow drainage and cross-pipe work within township right-of-way where a backhoe's size required equipment to be placed in residents' yards. He cited weekly rentals of $3,000 to $4,000, savings in yard restoration and contracted services, a potential three-year payback, and a 15-year service life with proper maintenance. He noted that the crew had replaced eight or nine cross pipes during the preceding month and that owning the equipment could allow more underground infrastructure work to be performed in-house.

Jill Lovett would remove the duplicate Stuart Park improvements entry from the general fund and retain it in parks and recreation. The Greenways, Trails, and Recreation grant required a 15% match, or approximately $30,000 from the township. Barnett's Mill had a $100,000 state budgetary funding grant for temporary shoring and initial stabilization of the west wall. The engineer had identified work that could be completed within that award and would be needed regardless of the full stabilization project, leaving approximately $617,000 of the $717,000 phase-one project.

Lindenwood Park awards totaled $1 million from the National Park Service, a $200,000 matching award, and $250,000 from C2P2. Remaining needs were approximately $800,000 for phase one and a $250,000 C2P2 match. Following a pending $200,000 Category 4 application submitted at the end of September, staff planned an $850,000 LSA statewide request, potentially increased to $1 million to include excavation. An authorizing resolution would return to the board; none was approved. Jill Lovett explained that grants had a three-year use period, but engineering, design, permitting, and bidding would have to precede construction. Federal funding required prevailing-wage compliance, and DEP permitting could affect the schedule. Construction grant activity remained outside draft totals while she determined the appropriate accounting treatment, including how to manage National Park Service funds separately. The draft included $300,000 for engineering.

Other 2027 items included township server replacement or a possible move to cloud services. Jill Lovett was awaiting assessment by the new IT vendor, Kirbtech, before bringing recommendations to the board. Computer replacements had been held from 2026 pending that review, including consideration of laptops rather than desktops. The website project also carried forward from 2026, with further information anticipated at the next meeting or in December.

The next item included $25,000 to $50,000 for a possible South Middleton compost facility agreement. South Middleton was expanding its site before considering access for Dickinson residents. The allowance reflected preliminary discussions about sharing contracted grinding costs; the township's eventual share would depend in part on usage. A preliminary $35,000 road degradation study allowance was also included. Jill Lovett explained that the county was considering a countywide study and might fund a substantial portion, but the township's actual cost was unknown and could be considerably lower.

Initial regional fire and EMS planning funds were included as a placeholder to support planning, evaluation, and development of the multi-municipal infrastructure strategy, including possible professional assistance if the participating municipalities determined it was needed. Anticipated grant funding for the 161 Old State Road Park Master Plan remained to be added. Jill Lovett proposed pursuing a county land partnership grant and noted the county's favorable response to the township's acquisition of the property.

Projects included Alexander Spring Road reconstruction, subject to funding, with staff hoping to secure sufficient grants to address more of the road. Staff also planned a renewed West Yellow Breeches Road grant application with added drainage. That dead-end road had been removed from the 2026 FB modification projects because it was a strong candidate for the dirt, gravel, and low-volume road grant program. The prior application was unsuccessful, but conservation district feedback identified drainage improvements to incorporate in a new request. Grant coverage could reach approximately 90%, excluding some engineering costs.

Burnt House Road repairs and thermoplastic markings reduced the estimate from more than $400,000 to approximately $180,000. Rather than milling and overlaying the entire section, staff proposed repairing rippled pavement where needed, including braking areas approaching intersections, and using reinforcing fabric or similar material to reduce recurring movement. Proposed safety features included retroreflective thermoplastic stop bars and four-foot STOP lettering at major intersections. Nate Bragunier would explore time-and-equipment contracting, with materials purchased at state contract prices, and possible CAPCOG bidding for thermoplastic work to obtain better pricing.

Vice Chairperson DeGaetano requested earlier improvements at Old York Road and Burnt House Road in response to repeated complaints. Nate Bragunier explained that pavement repairs should precede thermoplastic installation to avoid paying for markings twice. Staff could examine whether selected intersections could be addressed earlier if funds were available, but highway occupancy permitting at state routes could require 90 to 180 days. He had also contacted the power company about moving wires to a new pole so that the old pole could be removed to improve sight distance. Resident slow-down signs were discussed, but no decision was made.

Other items included replacement of the 2015 Ram 5500. Nate Bragunier explained that oversized equipment, particularly the plow, had contributed to suspension wear. He believed another year of use was possible, but the vehicle was nearing the end. A properly configured replacement could have a longer service cycle. The truck also served as a backup to the township's four full-size dump trucks during storms and otherwise assisted with cul-de-sacs, developments, and intersections.

Stuart Park parking paving would be proposed for a subsequent Greenways, Trails, and Recreation grant request. This would pave the stone parking area, distinct from the final paving coat near the restrooms included in the current request. The plan also included the 2024 Ferris mower replacement. Nate Bragunier anticipated bringing prior-plan purchases to the next meeting below budget, including a mower at approximately $8,000 after trade-in versus $16,000 budgeted. He attributed the savings to obtaining prices from vendors farther away while retaining the option of local servicing.

Staff would assess contracted mowing as parks expanded and compare that option with the equipment and public works time required for in-house mowing. Nate Bragunier reported that mowing Lindenwood Park in its current condition took approximately ten hours for one person or four and a half hours for two, before accounting for Stuart Park, 161 Old State Road, and other township properties.

Air-conditioning replacement had been deferred from 2026 while the older unit remained operational. Projects included western Alexander Spring Road reconstruction and base repairs, milling, and overlay for Stonehouse, Morreale, and Richland, subject to road study priorities. Nate Bragunier described settling along widened road edges that appeared to lack sufficient base. Interim paving and shoulder work were planned for the following week, including work on Alexander Spring Road using equipment borrowed from Penn Township. The annual

road maintenance allotment had not yet been assigned to specific roads; staff would use further assessment and a possible county road degradation study to refine priorities.

Municipal Campus stormwater work was deferred to 2029 pending a revised Clean Water grant application with no required match. The prior request had been unsuccessful, and feedback suggested its scope had been too broad. Jill Lovett noted that the basin already installed on the campus had helped runoff, allowing time to pursue funding. Municipal Office Complex paving would follow any stormwater installation so that newly paved surfaces would not have to be excavated for piping.

JD backhoe replacement assumed approximately 6,000 operating hours by 2029, subject to reassessment as the replacement year approached and funding became clearer. Nate Bragunier noted that travel between work sites added operating hours and that municipal use, including exposure to salt, contributed to wear. The truck-cleaning steam unit replacement moved from 2027 to 2029 after replacement parts restored satisfactory operation. Staff preferred to retain the functioning unit rather than replace it prematurely.

The plan scheduled chip and seal for Stonehouse, Morreale, and Richland in 2030 following the proposed 2029 repairs. Replacement of two 2018 Western Star dump trucks was staggered across 2030 and 2031 rather than replacing both in the same year. The 2031 road allotment remained undetermined. Mower replacement remained a placeholder pending a contracted-mowing comparison. Nate Bragunier explained that adding approximately 20 acres of mowing could require larger equipment costing approximately $100,000, rather than the smaller zero-turn mowers currently contemplated. Staff would compare purchase, maintenance, and employee time with contracted service costs. Computer replacement and compost allowances recurred throughout the five-year plan.

Chairman Kole emphasized keeping road maintenance within liquid fuels resources to avoid placing additional demands on the general fund and residents. Jill Lovett cautioned that liquid fuels funds could be exhausted around 2028 without additional project funding. Allocations excluding turnback payments fell from approximately $243,000 in 2023 to $237,000 in 2026, with a similar 2027 estimate; the turnback rate remained unchanged. Nate Bragunier noted that reduced commuting and greater vehicle fuel efficiency contributed to pressure on fuel-tax revenues. Staff identified grants for larger projects and shifting equipment purchases to other funds as ways to preserve available liquid fuels money for road maintenance.

Chairman Kole asked about the previously discussed separation of operating and capital budgets to provide a clearer strategic view without tracing projects through numerous accounting lines. Jill Lovett explained that some capital grant activity remained in the general fund for administrative ease. She stated that a different presentation and accounting approach could be developed in the following year, although she preferred not to restructure the current draft at that stage. No change in the accounting structure was approved.

The board returned to the discussion on fire protection fund and the request from Citizens Fire Company. The board discussed the gap between steady fire tax revenue and rising service costs, the risk of reduced staffing, and the need for sustainable regional funding. Jill Lovett agreed to prepare comparisons of tax increase options, and to provide the tax's history. Supervisor Line requested clearer comparisons of company requests, service areas, and call statistics.
Jill Lovett clarified that the fire tax supported fire protection only, while EMS was funded through the general fund. Cumberland Goodwill EMS anticipated a 3% increase for 2028; EMS billing and reimbursement shortfalls were also discussed. No tax increase, revised service contract, funding condition, or change to EMS funding was approved.

Jill Lovett agreed to distribute corrected fire funding materials electronically, along with the requested tax comparisons, tax history, and supporting study and staffing information, before the board made revenue or allocation decisions.

d. Next Steps

Jill Lovett planned to correct the general fund report, assemble the requested fire tax and service information, and distribute the revised budget materials electronically. Individual discussions with supervisors were proposed to review the information and identify remaining questions. An additional budget workshop could then be scheduled by email if needed before the budget returned to the board.
The board discussed presenting the proposed budget in November, allowing the required 20-day public review period, and returning it for consideration in December. The next meeting was identified as November 4th.

Adjournment

A motion was made by Vice Chairperson DeGaetano and seconded by Supervisor Line and passed unanimously to adjourn at 7:26pm.

Respectfully submitted,

Grace Hogue
Secretary/Treasurer

