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Factoryville Borough Council approves preliminary budget with no tax increase

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Factoryville Borough Mayor Gary Evans, left, swears in Matthew Kinback as a new junior councilperson during the borough's monthly meeting Nov. 11.

FACTORYVILLE — Members of the borough council approved a preliminary 2016 general fund budget of \$303,847 without a real estate tax increase during a monthly meeting Nov. 11 at borough hall.

While the budget is balanced without an increase, several factors made that task difficult this year, according to Borough Manager Mary Ellen Buckbee.

"The reason it was so tight is because ordinarily we get a \$15,000 anonymous donation that we're not expecting to receive," she said, referring to an anonymous donation the borough has received in the past. "We've also experienced a decrease in our earned income of approximately \$8,000. In addition to

that, we have a higher police budget.

"We have to be really careful and watch the budget," she added. "We're doing OK, but we really need to tighten our belts."

In order to balance the budget, the council plans to utilize \$13,942 that has been in reserve for the fire company debt service.

"Years ago, representatives from Clinton Township and Factoryville Borough met with members from the Factoryville Fire Department, which asked each municipality to help pay its debt service," Buckbee said. "We had to take those funds out which is fine because the fire company doesn't have a new building and debt service at this time. When they do, I think they will have to ask for it again because it's been so many years and there are new people serving on council."

A final budget must be approved during a meeting at 6:30 p.m. Dec. 9 at the borough hall, 161 College Ave.

Members of the borough council approved a motion to designate a handicapped parking spot in front of a residence in the 100 block of College Avenue.

"I don't have a problem making a handicapped spot, but we definitely need to address the situation in the future," Council Vice President Bill Edwards said. "If not, we're going to have nothing but blue spaces along College Avenue. We need to move forward with a policy."

Grant Writer Sadie Rozenburg announced the borough received a Marcellus Shade Legacy Grant through Wyoming County for \$4,040 to aid in the construction of a trail connecting the play pockets at Christy Mathewson Park.

Rozenburg added the borough is planning a public meeting for 6 p.m. Thursday at the Factoryville Public Library for representatives from each community organization to help improve dialogue between the different groups.

According to Buckbee, Countryside Conservancy Trail Coordinator Cheryl Ellsworth asked if the borough would contribute money toward a grant match to extend the Conservancy's Trolley Trail in Factoryville at Riverside Drive.

A decision was not made during the meeting, but Buckbee urged the council members to consider donating to the trail.

"It would really be a feather in our caps to have that amenity in Factoryville Borough," she said.

Lackawanna Trail junior Matthew Kinback was sworn in as a new junior council member by Mayor Gary Evans.

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