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Forks Twp. keeps taxes steady, OKs wage hike

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By MEREDITH BOWEN
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FORKS TWP. | Supervisors on Thursday unanimously approved a 2006 budget that keeps taxes steady -- the 10th straight year rates have held.

Under the spending plan, expenditures account for about \$6.84 million and income after expenses will be nearly \$862,000.

The township tax rate is 4.6 mills, which means a homeowner whose property is assessed at \$50,000 will pay \$230 in township taxes next year.

The budget includes a 4 percent wage increase for all employees.

Supervisors' Vice Chairman Donald Miller said officials had debated whether department heads would receive the same increase as employees, and ultimately approved it.

Though health care costs for all employees increased, the cost was \$150,000 less than expected, said township Manager Kathy Kichline.

Expenditures for the police department also rose under the budget, from \$1,584,000 this year to \$1,954,000 in 2006. The change includes the promotion of two patrol officers to corporals and one to detective as well as \$60,000 to purchase new vehicles.

Also Thursday:

(Kichline said the state Department of Transportation has approved a stop signal, most likely a four-way stop, at Arndt Road and Bushkill Drive.

(Supervisors tabled until Jan. 19 a proposal by Supervisor-elect C. David Howell for a new committee structure that would match two supervisors with each committee. Now, a single supervisor acts as liaison to different departments.

(The board unanimously decided to allow members of all of the township boards who were reapplying for their positions to forgo the interview process. Planning commission Chairman Vito Tamborrino Jr., whose term ends this year, said he felt insulted that he would be asked to re-interview.

"If this board is dissatisfied with my performance, they should tell me now that I'm not going to be reconfirmed," Tamborrino said.

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