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## Keeping tax same in '07 'doable,' Forks official says

**Township gets help because municipal building project isn't in the budget.**

By Joe Nixon Of The Morning Call

Forks may be able to hold the line on property tax for an 11th straight year.

The township supervisors approved a timeline Thursday for budget discussions, and after the session finance manager James Farley said he was hopeful the property tax rate would remain steady in 2007.

"It's doable. I really think it's doable," said Farley, adding that some items relating to the municipal complex construction project won't be in the budget next year. "That will give us some leeway," he said. The \$10 million complex — a new municipal building and fire station and an expanded police station — was completed this year.

Farley also said the outlook on fuel costs has improved.

The supervisors scheduled budget review sessions for Oct. 16 and 17, with the unveiling of a rough draft of the budget on Nov. 2. Final adoption is set for Dec. 21.

This year's budget of just under \$7 million kept the property tax at 4.6 mills for the 10th year. Under that rate, a resident with property assessed at \$50,000 pays \$230 to the township.

The supervisors also decided not to advertise in a statewide municipal magazine for its township manager post. There are 47 applicants for the job, left vacant in early July when the supervisors fired Cathy Kichline of Upper Nazareth Township. The reasons for her dismissal were not made public. Her severance agreement continued her pay through Sept. 3.

The board met in private after Thursday's business meeting to start reviewing resumes. Supervisor David Howell said there are several candidates who could be called in for interviews. Supervisor Bonnie Nicholas was also in favor of holding off on additional advertising. "Once we interview them, we can go from there," she said.

In other business, the supervisors unanimously approved the return of Forks Community Days next year, after a successful two-day run this year. Nicholas said many people who attended the event asked if it would be back next year. The festival, held in the municipal park, was guided by a group of volunteers headed by Harry and Sue Bennett. The township also provided support.

The event will take place Sept. 15-16, Nicholas said.

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