

BUDGET

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Harveys Lake Borough and Jackson, Lake, Lehman and Ross townships in Luzerne County and a 1.005 percent increase for Noxen Township in Wyoming County.

This most recent budget proposal sets the millage rate at 8.7062 in Luzerne County and 56.4218 in Wyoming County.

Superintendent James McGovern said the board was able to pinch pennies in certain areas of the budget, including overtime

and supply costs. He said the district has saved money from keeping certain services in-house, including special education services and transportation.

The curtailment of several programs, approved by the board at last month's meeting, also helped ease the budget deficit. McGovern said up to five teaching positions could be eliminated due to the cuts. Administrators will also receive a pay freeze, he said.

McGovern also noted the school received a \$200,000 surplus in its delinquent tax collection and a one-month return on the district health trust — both unexpected budgetary factors.

He said the current economic

climate was justification to see where the board could make more changes to the spending plan.

"We looked at the increasing gas prices and everything else, and thought this could ease some pain," he said.

Salko said the reduction in state funding forces "irresponsible" cuts for the Lake-Lehman School District.

"Given the current financial situation, I know people are in a tough spot," he said. "I'm concerned with the situation at Lake-Lehman."

In other news...

• History Day Advisor Mike Novrocki presented certificates

to the 26 students who participated in this year's regional competition at Penn State Wilkes-Barre campus in March. He said Lake-Lehman won first place as the Senior Division Outstanding School for the 12th consecutive year at the event and 21 of the students went on to compete on the state level.

• The board hired the following head coaches for the 2011-12 fall sports season: Michael Kostrobala for boys' soccer, Sandy Dobrowolski for cheerleading, John Sobocinski for cross country, Jean Lipski for field hockey, Gerald Gilsky for football, Tiffany Hettes for girls' volleyball and

Thomas Motovidlak for golf.

• The board accepted a letter of resignation from Nancy Susan Williams, teacher associate, effective May 27, and a letter of retirement from Catherine Rhone, head custodian at the junior/senior high school, effective May 27.

• A refund of property taxes paid was awarded to Albert Sweitzer for a property located in Lehman Township in the amount of \$135.64.

• The board will execute a letter of agreement between the district and Luzerne County Community College to conduct Project RISE, Reinforcement and In-

struction in Secondary Education, from July 11 through Aug. 18.

• The board authorized administration to utilize the Keystone Recovery Credit Program and the Benton Area School District summer school program in an effort to provide more summer school options for students.

• The board authorized administration to enter into an agreement between the district and Dimension Tel, LLC Telecommunications Consulting & Support Services of Wyoming for a telecommunications expense analysis of all district telephone line and circuits.

FIRST

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advised the parents of the young lady that, had the ambulance arrived two minutes later, she may not have survived.

Jack Stephenson became active in his community in the early 1960s when he became a member of the Trucksville Fire Company and the Kingston Township Ambulance Company, rising to the rank of captain.

In the early days, Stephenson's family home served as the fire, base station and "fire phone" where his wife served as the dispatcher.

Stephenson moved to Center Moreland and joined the Northmoreland Township Fire Company, serving on the board of directors and as a safety officer. He now serves as secretary of the Franklin/Northmoreland Township Ambulance Company and is an active driver for the

organization.

The Kunkle Fire and Ambulance Company's call volume is approximately 500 calls per year. The company has two Basic Life Support Units.

The successful operation of these units could not have been accomplished without the leadership of ambulance chief Dorothy "Dodie" Coolbaugh who has been ambulance chief since 1993 and a certified EMT and member of the company for more than 24 years.

In addition, Coolbaugh organizes and, on many occasions, proves training to ambulance personnel, oversees the paperwork required by the Department of Health and assists with billing procedures.

She is a certified CPR/First Aid instructor with the American Red Cross and teaches ambulance personnel, along with members of the community, police, fire, Little League, Girl Scouts and Boy Scouts in first aid and CPR.

GAS

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At its May 3 meeting, the board struck down a proposed zoning ordinance amendment to provide regulations on the natural gas industry. What was passed was a resolution declaring the current zoning ordinance, passed in June 2008, as invalid. This measure gave the board 30 days to provide reasons for the ordinance's inadequacy and 180 days to pass an amendment to address these issues.

Brennan, who prepared the list of inadequacies 15 days prior to the legal deadline, said the current ordinance was not created with natural gas development in mind, and none of the nine zoning districts address the issue at all.

Just one of the districts, industrial, has regulations on handling hazardous materials,

which Brennan defined as "any material that, by reason of its ... characteristics may ... pose a substantial present or potential hazard to human health or the environment when improperly treated, stored, transported, disposed of or otherwise managed." He said the natural gas industry inherently deals with such materials.

Another issue was one of spacing — Brennan said the industrial zone is "very small" and does not offer enough room for the gas companies to reasonably develop business, which he said the township is required to provide.

Residents expressed concerns about whether the township is arbitrarily forced to provide adequate space for the companies.

"Why are you obligated to the gas companies more than to the oil and water companies?" asked resident and Gas Drilling Awareness Coalition member Mary Rodriguez.

Brennan said while industrial

businesses within the township have adequate space to conduct business, it is the township's legal obligation to accommodate those who do not.

Township Engineer Thomas Doughton said the same scenario happened when coal mining was a big industry in the area, and municipalities had to create provisions within zoning ordinances to allow miners access to coal for business purposes.

Brennan said the reasons are provided as part of the ordinance revision process. Public comments were taken into consideration for what Brennan is currently working on, which is building upon the proposed zoning ordinance amendment. Residents packed a public hearing in April to express concerns about the amendment in April.

Brennan hopes to develop a curative amendment to the current zoning ordinance in 120 days to allow enough time for advertisement and public hearings on the issue.

The board also approved SM Design for land development and subdivision engineering reviews and Mining and Environmental Engineers for storm water technical reviews of applications related to natural gas development, upon Doughton's recommendation.

In other news, the board ...

• Approved an inter-municipal liquor license transfer to Fred DiMaria, of Special Event Catering LLC, from Frank Carone, of Avoca. DiMaria cited the fact his business, which is located at Apple Tree Terrace at Newberry Estates, recently changed ownership as a reason for the transfer.

• Announced notification of the Borton-Lawson engineering firm's application of a general National Pollutant Discharge Elimination System permit for construction on the Misericordia University campus.

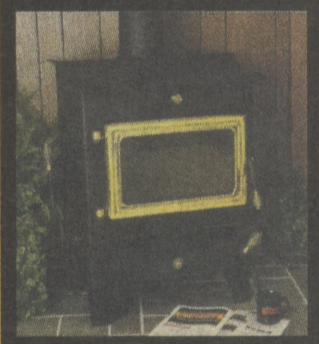

• Approved a resolution to comply with Act 51 of 2009 to provide benefits for killed-in-action police officers' families.

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