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### Township Budget Introduced, Brings No Tax Hike

The proposed budget, if adopted, would keep the local property tax rate the same as last year.

By [Sean McCullen](#) | [Email the author](#) | March 13, 2012

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Residents would receive the same municipal tax bills this year as they did last year under the proposed 2012 township budget.

The township's 2012 budget, as introduced during Monday night's Township Council meeting, calls for the same exact tax levy as the 2011 spending plan's.

Th budget proposal carries "a zero increase for the third straight budget year in a row," Council President Glen Bianchini said.

A public hearing on the 2012 budget has been scheduled for Monday, April 23.

Councilman Sam Siler was among several elected officials to publicly thank Cardis and his staff, as well as Mayor David Mayer, during Monday's meeting for putting together a budget without a tax hike.

"We'll take a look at it and see if any additional cuts can be made," Siler added.

The \$51,616,205 spending plan is to be supported by a \$37,346,064 local tax levy—the same tax revenue called for to support \$49.4 million in appropriations for 2011 —Business Administrator Tom Cardis said.

Cardis noted the township will use \$3.8 million from surplus to help keep the tax rate where it was for 2011. The surplus fund would dip from about \$5 million to a little more than \$1.2 million under the budget, he noted.

The township is expected to receive in 2012 [the same \\$5,106,459 in state aid](#) it received in support of its last two budgets.

While a handful of residents clapped loudly after Council unanimously voted to accept the no-tax-hike budget, a few took to the microphone during the meeting's public portion to ask why the township could not reduce taxes, particularly in light of newfound revenue.

"Being proud of a zero-increase budget is *great* politically, but for taxpayers, if there's an abundance of revenue coming in, maybe we would consider lowering our taxes rather than spending our money. Is that feasible?" Ray Polidoro, chairman of the Gloucester Township Republican Municipal Committee, said, noting [increased revenue from red-light cameras](#) along Blackwood Clementon Road and commercial development in Sicklerville in recent years. "Maybe there's a few things we don't need to buy."

Cardis indicated there's very little flexibility when building the township's budget given mandated payments to the public employees' pension programs, ever-rising insurance costs and debt service, among other appropriation hikes from year to year.

"There is a need for \$5 million in work," the business administrator said, referring to a \$5 million-plus capital spending plan for which Council approved a bond ordinance on first reading Monday night. "This is a big town. ... If you're saying we shouldn't spend money on capital (improvements), I respectfully disagree."

Mayer, who has introduced the budget since taking office in January 2010, did not attend Monday's Council meeting. He is attending the National League of Cities' Congressional City Conference in Washington, D.C. this week.

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