

TOWNSHIP BOARD

Bedford slates \$1M for street plan, work

Board hires engineer for paving projection

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Larry O'Dell



TEMPERANCE — The Bedford Township Board has budgeted \$1 million for road work next fiscal year and hired an engineer to come up with a long-term pavement-management plan for the community's deteriorating streets.

The \$1 million expenditure is allocated for fiscal year 2015, which begins July 1. It represents an increase from the \$850,000 budgeted for the current fiscal year, but the 2015 number is misleading because it includes a \$250,000 carryover for work the Monroe County Road Commission was not capable of doing this year, Treasurer Paul Francis explained to board members last week.

The 2014-2015 budget does include a hefty increase — to \$25,000 — in money allocated to mosquito control. The township spent \$2,000 in the current year fighting mosquitoes and does not employ spraying.

Board members pronounced themselves satisfied with the added funding for mosquito control. Supervisor Greg Stewart said officials should do a better job of informing the public of services such as this.

Total budgeted spending for the next fiscal year is \$4.65 million, compared to an estimated \$4.34 million this year.

In keeping with its focus on roads, the board agreed to pay Mannik and Smith Group \$9,800 for engineering services to prepare the pavement-management plan for primary and local roads. Subdivision streets are excluded.

The engineering firm will examine Bedford's roads and their drainage and prepare a three-year plan that includes recommended repairs and costs, senior vice president Barry Buschmann told the board.

Streets will be rated, photos taken, and data compiled and included in a report.

Mr. Stewart described the Mannik and Smith project as "a comprehensive look at how we can best spend our money."

Trustee Larry O'Dell said more should have been done to repair roads this fiscal year, but he noted that Frenchtown Township was in the same predicament as Bedford in having road money that can't be spent "because the road commission doesn't have the capability."

In other business, the board approved charging a \$50 administrative fee every time the ordinance officer checks overgrown lawns or icy sidewalks. The board said it decided this because some property owners have found it less expensive to let the township rectify their violation than to have the work done themselves.

The board also approved renewing Bedford's membership in the Michigan Township Association at a cost of \$5,642.34. The vote was 6-1, with Trustee Nancy Tienvieri dissenting because she disagreed with the lobbying group's \$164.34 charge for legal defense.

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