

BOROUGH OF WATCHUNG

MINUTES

WORKSHOP MEETING OF MARCH 26, 2011

1:00 PM

MAYOR'S STATEMENT: Mayor Mobus called the meeting to order at 1:00 P.M. and made the following statement: Under the provisions of N.J.S.A. 10:4-6 et seq., notice of the time and place of this meeting was given by way of annual notice to the Courier News, Echoes Sentinel, and Star Ledger, and posted at Borough Hall.

SALUTE TO THE FLAG, SILENT PRAYER, AND ROLL CALL

Joren [P] Black [P] Franklin [P] Pote [P] Nehls [P] Cassidy [P]

Also present were Administrator/Clerk Lauren Fellin, CFO Bill Hance and Deputy Clerk Michelle DeRocco.

WORKSHOP DISCUSSION:

Review of 2011 Department Budget Requests

Judge Gasiorowski, speaking on behalf of the Court, said their entire budget had been reduced by 20% last year. Councilwoman Cassidy questioned \$1,000. spent on a computer and CFO Bill Hance explained that was last year, and Judge Gasiorowski said he does not anticipate any new expenses this year. When questioned about a Court Officer, the Judge explained the Court uses on staff personnel.

Chief Wenzel and Lt. Egnasko, said last year the Police Department's budget was cut to \$92,000. and this year to \$138,000. Lt. Egnasko said the purchase of two new cars at \$30,000. each will bring it back up to \$198,000. Chief Wenzel said he will be requesting two new cars each year, as they should be replaced when they reach 100,000 miles, and noted they run sometimes 24 hours per day, and the electronic equipment is an additional drain. When Councilman Nehls questioned overtime costs, Chief Wenzel said he is strict with scheduling and overtime is hard to anticipate. He said FCC is requiring narrow banding of radios by 2013, and the CAD system is soon to be outdated. Councilwoman Joren said it is best to replace the CAD verses throwing money into maintenance. Mayor Mobus said it is imperative that the Department's communication equipment is kept up to date. Chief Wenzel said the Department is looking into the pros and cons of e-tickets, and cameras for Rt. 22.

Public Works Manager Bob Burns spoke first on the Buildings and Grounds budget. Bill Hance said a major change in this budget was the crossover from in-house maintenance people to an outside contractor. Bob explained it is hard to predict building repairs, such as the compressor at Police headquarters and HVAC repairs. Councilwoman Cassidy discussed the energy audit and what the Borough may be replacing through the energy grants. Bill Hance said we should hear if the Borough will get the grant by next month. In regard to Roads, Councilman Nehls said he was comfortable with the amount encumbered for overtime, and Bob explained the late snow event incurred a lot of overtime which he hopes to recoup from FEMA. He said he will be buying salt from a different vendor and that the Borough still owes the County 25 tons. They discussed the vehicle replacement wish list, and the much needed drainage improvements at Phillips Field and the tennis courts. Councilman Nehls reviewed the Sewer line with Bob, including miscellaneous rental costs, and the increase in the cost of boiled.

Maria Bachert, Recreation Director, said the goal of the Commission was to make each program self supporting. Council President Joren questioned the low enrollment numbers for the summer park program and Mrs. Bachert said she cannot explain it other than the cost had gone up to \$75.00 or the camp program now being offered by Lifetime, the new gym facility. All agreed the summer park program needed to be reevaluated. Other budget lines such as uniforms, trophies, fees were discussed.

Construction Official Ed Bennett said the Construction office runs differently than most other departments, as there is a lot of face time with the public. He said his Department is busy and running tight, and that as a service department it is counterproductive not having personnel in at night.

In regard to the Environmental Commission, Councilman Franklin spoke on behalf of Co-Chair Lynn Franklin and said their budget is lower than last year's because they do not intend to participate in the GreenFest this year.

Tracee Schaefer and Carolyn Taylor, representing the Planning Board, said the Master Plan is due to be re-examined, and they hope Mark Healey can stay on as Consultant. They said their budget hasn't changed for the most part, but they had to add to the photo copy expenses as the machine is shared with other Departments. Bill Hance said he will be re-appropriating the copy expenses. Ms. Schaefer said NJ Planning Officials membership was taken out of the last budget, and Chairman Speeney would like it back in.

Gary Greves, Fire Safety Official, said his budget is basically the same, with a little more revenue coming in from the State. In regard to the OEM budget, he said Maria Fittipaldi has been a great help to him.

Fire Chief Skip Bell said he basically looks at the bottom line of his budget. Councilwoman Cassidy discussed turnout gear, hoses, janitorial expenses, the stipend and the Capital budget. Chief Bell said the Department is still dealing with the NYC issue, noting they seem to be looking for a new frequency or a lawsuit. He reminded all of the re-banding requirement for 2012.

Rob Winston, speaking on behalf of the Rescue Squad, said they tried to keep their budget the same as last year, however, he just received a letter from the State saying they no longer will reimburse for EMT training, or re-certifications. He said this will be a hardship to the Squad, and hope not a deterrent for new members. Rob said this will now have to come out of their donation monies, and due to the current economic conditions, donations are down as well. He stressed they will continue to be fiscally responsible. Rob said the other issue they will be facing is the radio frequency mandate but they are waiting to see what the other departments will be doing. Mayor Mobus said possibly the Borough can do something for the Squad in the donation line.

Traffic & Beautification - Councilman Nehls on behalf of the Committee, said their budget is \$225. and Sue Forton believes this will be within their needs.

Historical Committee - Councilwoman Cassidy said this year was a transition year and donations will be coming in to help in the renovations of the Texier House. All agreed to leave the budget as requested.

Board of Health - Councilman Nehls said the biggest increase is the animal control services of Roxdane Kennels. Mrs. Fellin explained that the after hours costs are high, and all is listed in their monthly reports. All agreed that Roxdane offers the best services in the area, verses the high cost of the Plainfield Humane Society, and animal control is mandated by the State. Councilman Nehls said the other large amount is for the services of MiddleBrook Regional Health Commission for the services of the Health Officer.

Tax Assessor Ed Kerwin was present to discuss his proposed budget, in particular, answer questions regarding the legal line item. He explained this line covers the fees Martin Allen charges for tax appeals.

In regard to Administration and Finance, Mrs. Fellin said she didn't change anything. Councilwoman Joren said there was discussion as to bringing back the mailing of the newsletter and asked if this was accounted for in this budget and Reenie said it was. She said it will be printed and folded in house.

In general, all agreed that most departments were not properly using the correct line items and all were told to make an effort to do so for the future. Councilwoman Joren suggested a complete review of copy expenses.

PUBLIC PORTION

None.

ADJOURNMENT

There being no further business to come before the Council, the meeting was adjourned at 4:15 P.M. to the call of the Chair and the next scheduled meeting of the Mayor and Council to be held on Thursday, April 14, 2011..

Respectfully submitted,

Michelle DeRocco, RMC
Deputy Clerk