

BOROUGH OF WATCHUNG

MINUTES

WORKSHOP MEETING OF MARCH 19, 2005

8:30 A.M.

MAYOR'S STATEMENT: Mayor Ellis called the meeting to order at 8:35 A.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, Messenger-Gazette and Star Ledger, and posted at Borough Hall.

SALUTE TO THE FLAG, SILENT PRAYER, AND ROLL CALL

Black [P] Franklin [P] Mobus [A] Joren [P] Harding [P] Pote [P]

Also present were Auditor Bob Swisher, CFO William Hance, Administrator/Clerk Lauren Fellin, and Deputy Clerk Michelle DeRocco.

WORKSHOP DISCUSSION:

Review of 2005 Department Budget Requests

Kevin Sumner, MiddleBrook Regional Health Commission, said the changes in his budget this year reflect the addition of a much needed part-time educator, and noted the annual grant has gone down this year by \$1,000.

John Frosoni, Chief of Police, said his budget is mostly fixed expenses, and he is only requesting two new vehicles this year, with one coming from the Capital budget. Mayor Ellis asked if the Borough was up to speed with our radio communications system and Chief Frosoni said our current system will be obsolete in a few years. He explained that he will be proposing to go to UHF system which will provide much better coverage, however, is very expensive. He said he will reach out to other towns to see if we may be able to get a price break if more than one system is purchased. Mayor Ellis asked if this could be phased in over the years and the Chief said no, it was a one-shot deal. In regard to his Capital budget, he said he is requesting a modem upgrade, a four-wheel drive vehicle (Durango), 2 mobile data terminals, 2 spare pistols, 2 desk top computers, an audio visual interrogation unit, and a speed sign. A brief discussion was held regarding safety in the courtroom.

Pam Steves, Court Administrator, said in her Capital budget she is asking for a computer and a new recorder. Mayor Ellis congratulated her on doing a good job.

Charles Gunther, Public Works Manager, said his Sewer budget is up this year, due to the rise in the price of bioxide, as is the Roads budget due to increase in the cost of salt. He said other than that, there are no major changes this year. In regard to his Capital budget, Mr. Gunther said the new Stormwater Regulations require stricter maintenance of catch basins, and for that he would like a router Jet Vac truck, which he has requested in previous years. Mayor Ellis said that the Borough has a wonderful relationship with the Township of Warren and it is possible we may be able to work something out with them. Mr. Gunther said various projects need to be done in regard to Buildings and Grounds, such as raising the header at the East End Firehouse entrance, the overlay of the apron at the East End, exterior lighting at the Police Department, and the painting of the apparatus room. He said he is also looking for energy efficient overhead doors and an additional bay for the garage, in addition to the grounds keeper machine which will eventually need to be replaced.

Maria Bachert, Recreation Director, said her budget is basically the same as last years, even though the programs are growing and this year they will be taking on the Mayor's Regatta. She said for her long term Capital budget, she is researching skate parks. In anticipation of the grant

from the Freeholders, Mrs. Bachert said they plan to upgrade the Best Lake area. Mayor Ellis thanked Mrs. Bachert and her Committee for taking on the Regatta and said her leadership has been outstanding.

Ed Bennett, Construction Official, said that revenues are down this year, due to a reduction and completion of major construction projects. He informed the governing body that he is running out of space and Mayor Ellis suggested looking into a long term microfiche project. Mr. Bennett said the governing body may also want to implement a fee for zoning permits, as other towns do.

Dolores Kresge, Environmental Commission, said her budget is modest and geared toward education. She reported that the Consultant they hired last year from their grant money is busy writing the forestry plan. Mayor Ellis thanked Mrs. Kresge for all that she has done for the Borough and for how long she has done it.

David Gill, Tax Assessor, said the value of the Borough has gone up, and residents are getting used to the assessments.

Lt. Helder Piexoto, representing the Rescue Squad, said they are requesting new extrication equipment in their Capital budget. He said they are anticipating new members and are able to train them in-house. Mayor Ellis said it will be helpful for the Rescue Squad to be working with their new liaison, Councilman Pote.

Jim Boyd, representing the Planning Board, explained the increase in their budget is due to the appropriation of funds to cover the review and revision of the Master Plan, and revision and modification of the zoning maps. There is also an anticipation of an increase for consultant costs to review escrow fees.

Gary Greves, Fire Safety Official, distributed his year-end inspection report which included an overview of monies coming in. He said his budget is quite simple, and thanked Charles Gunther and Victoria Rousseau for their assistance in putting it together. He reported that there will be a change in the fees for smoke detectors and carbon monoxide detectors and will be looking into implementing a "hot works" permit. Councilman Pote thanked Mr. Greves for all that he has done at the schools, especially with the construction going on.

Catherine Park, Tax Collector, reported that the Borough's collection rate is better than ever and she will be having a tax sale on the 21st of April. She said everything is going smoothly.

Sue Forton, Traffic and Beautification, said her \$3,500 budget should take care of all the plantings by the circle. She said she is looking to plant pachysandra by the Best Lake parking lot and wants to clean up the stream behind the Texier House. She said the Spratford Park project is going before the Board of Adjustment.

Robert Pittenger, Assistant Fire Chief, said the Fire Department's budget is only up \$484 this year and discussed the payment of stipends. In their Capital budget they are asking to replace the Suburban and are looking to put money away each year so that they can purchase a major vehicle in 2010.

William Hance, Finance Department, said his department incurs basically the same expenses every year. He answered some questions the governing body had regarding the debt payback schedule and Auditor Bob Swisher discussed surplus and equalized valuation in regard to the high school budget. The need for a cap ordinance was also discussed, as well as the date to introduce the budget. Mayor Ellis thanked Mr. Swisher for the information with a simple interpretation.

RESOLUTIONS:

R1:3/19/05 - Executive Session

Property Acquisition: Block 3.01, Lot 29

Councilman Black offered R1:3/19/05 authorizing an executive session, with a second by Councilman Mobus and unanimously approved.

Upon return to regular session at 1:20 PM, all members previously present, were again in attendance.

PUBLIC PORTION

No one from the public was present.

ADJOURNMENT

There being no further business to come before the Council, the workshop meeting was adjourned at 1:25 PM to the call of the Chair or the next scheduled meeting which will be held at 7:30 PM on March 24, 2005.

Respectfully submitted,

Michelle DeRocco
Deputy Clerk