

MINUTES - SPECIAL MEETING FOR BUDGET WORKSHOP - MARCH 8, 2012 PAGE 1

THE THURSDAY, MARCH 8, 2012 SPECIAL MEETING FOR BUDGET WORKSHOP OF THE TOWNSHIP COMMITTEE OF THE TOWNSHIP OF WATERFORD, CALLED TO ORDER AT 5:00 PM BY THE MAYOR, MARYANN MERLINO.

NOTICE OF TIME AND DATE FOR THIS MEETING WAS SENT TO THE COURIER-POST AND RECORD BREEZE/CENTRAL RECORD NEWSPAPERS, AND A COPY IS POSTED ON THE BULLETIN BOARD IN THE MUNICIPAL BUILDING IN COMPLIANCE WITH THE "OPEN PUBLIC MEETINGS LAW".

SALUTE TO THE FLAG:

ROLL CALL:

Committeeman Richardson - Absent (sick)
Committeeman Hurley - Present
Committeeman Hamilton - Present
Committeeman Critelli - Present
Mayor Merlino - Present

PROFESSIONALS:

Virginia L. Chandler, Township Clerk - Present
Lawrence C. Ruocco, Township Administrator - Present
Stephen A. Miller, Township Chief Finance Officer - Present
Susan E. Danson, Township Treasurer/Purchasing Agent - Present
Debra L. Shaw-Blemings, Deputy Township Clerk - Present

DISCUSSION ON BUDGET FOR THE YEAR 2012:

Mayor Merlino turned the floor over to Mr. Critelli, Director of Finance.

Mr. Critelli asked Mr. Miller, CFO, for an update on budget recommendations.

Mr. Miller stated he was instructed by the Director to try to get the increase on the budget to 4 cents. He and Susan Danson had re-evaluated the budget and submitted a memo detailing their thoughts for necessary adjustments with the request for committee input. He noted that the budget issues are due to the reduction of State Aid and Revenue not over spending. He did remove the line items for hiring a new Police officer and Public Works employee. He pointed out that IT hours were increased and the employee payroll and benefits are a significant portion of expenses for this year.

Mr. Critelli asked the Committee members for any comments.

Mr. Hamilton requested a clarification on retirement benefits.

Mr. Miller explained that Pension Contributions, Insurance and Payroll are the biggest numbers on the budget. He suggested considering asking the retirees to contribute to their insurance costs just as employees are contributing. He also noted the departments have kept their budget increases to 2% from previous 2011 allotments, which is great considering the rising costs across the board.

Mr. Hurley noted the decrease in tax revenues was due to collections being down and the loss of appealed assessed evaluations down 3M. The MUA usage rates have not been increased in well over 7 years. Bowman & Company is updating a report completed a few years ago and that is due in April. The fact is 65% of the budget is payroll, a lay-off, privatizing grass cutting, equipment and auto maintenance may have to be considered as most of the police fleet is under warranty excluding oil changes. He prefers not deferring the school tax.

Mayor Merlino stated the last route she would entertain was to include any lay-offs.

PUBLIC COMMENT PORTION OF THE MEETING:

MAYOR OPENS THE MEETING TO THE PUBLIC FOR COMMENTS:

David Cilona, Fire Chief, detailed various cuts he would be willing to forego on his budget for the fire department. He wants to do everything his department can to help reduce the budget costs. He is continuously searching for Grants, etc. to subsidize maintaining the fire department.

Stephen Miller, CFO, reminded the committee the budget must be introduced at the next Township Committee Meeting on March 14th by State mandate.

Edward Toussaint, Director of Community Development, offered to donate a 40 foot storage container he owns to the fire department in order to replace the rented storage trailer.

Betty Anne Gardner, EMS Chief, expressed her concerns over changing the current operation procedures for her department and needed clarification of the procedure for any emergency maintenance issues as that was not conveyed last meeting.

Mr. Hamilton stated the Committee would try hard to maintain the previous procedure.

MAYOR CLOSES THE MEETING TO THE PUBLIC FOR COMMENTS:

Mr. Critelli requested the Committee review Mr. Richardson's memo suggesting various budget cuts as they appeared feasible.

Stephen Miller, CFO, agreed on Mr. Richardson's notes but after evaluating each line item he still recommends a 7 cent increase. He noted that deferring the school tax is a paper transaction creating artificial surplus and does not recommend doing such. He also does not think personnel concessions should be considered. He remarked that the water and sewer issue does need to be addressed now but won't be realized until next year's budget. He then suggested the Committee decide on a bottom line number they are all comfortable with and reminded everyone that a decision needed to be made tonight if possible.

Mr. Hamilton agreed we have to take care of the water and sewer situation. He wants to make sure the Fire, Police and EMS departments are comfortable with their budgets and get all they need to perform their duties.

Stephen Miller, CFO, commented that the procedure for the refund of the Library budget surplus was a long process and may not be a consideration as they may hold 120% of their expenditures in a surplus fund.

Mayor Merlino requested all committee members review the budget one more time. She appointed Mr. Critelli as the contact to submit any additional comments.

ADJOURNMENT: (6:35PM)

A motion was made by Hurley, 2nd by Hamilton to adjourn.

ALL WERE IN FAVOR:

Committeeman Hurley – Yes

Committeeman Hamilton – Yes

Committeeman Critelli – Yes

Mayor Merlino – Yes

Respectfully submitted by,

Debra L. Shaw-Blemings, Deputy Clerk