

MINUTES OF THE BUDGET MEETING OF
THE TEANECK TOWNSHIP COUNCIL
HELD IN THE MUNICIPAL BUILDING COUNCIL CHAMBERS ON
WEDNESDAY, JANUARY 13, 2010

Mayor Feit called the Open Session Meeting of the Teaneck Township Council to order at 7:05 p.m., and asked all those present to rise for the Pledge of Allegiance.

ROLL CALL

Present: C. Gussen (arrived at 8:00 p.m.), C. Hameeduddin, DM. Parker, C. Honis, C. Toffler, Mayor Feit.

Absent: C. Katz.

Also Present: W. Broughton, Municipal Manager; L. Aportela-Hernandez, Municipal Clerk.

MAYOR'S ANNOUNCEMENT

Adequate notice of this meeting has been provided by Resolution 322-09, setting the 2010 meeting dates, and Resolution 384-09 and the December 23, 2009 Sunshine Notice amending the 2010 meeting dates, sending a copy to THE RECORD, THE SUBURBANITE, THE BERGEN NEWS/SUN BULLETIN, THE JEWISH STANDARD, and THE COUNTY SEAT, filing a copy in the Township Clerk's Office and posting it on the Municipal Building bulletin board, and the Mayor hereby directs that this statement be included in the minutes.

MEETING OPEN TO THE PUBLIC FOR GOOD AND WELFARE

Mayor Feit inquired whether any member of the Council had any comments prior to opening the meeting to any comments from the public.

No Councilmember had any comments.

Mayor Feit declared that any members of the public who wished to be heard come forward and state their names and addresses for the record. Comments were limited to five minutes per person.

Joan Davis - 976 Alpine Drive - stated that Council is seeking to change the form of government by encroaching on the Manager, mentioned the problems with the PAL building, questioned debt service, recommended placing any future incurred debt by referendum, discussed the maintenance of the Library and the loss of the reference collection, and told Council that the budget cannot be increased.

Art Vatsky - 950 Garrison Avenue - mentioned that there is no merit to keeping the PAL building, which should be taken down in an economical fashion and replaced with trees, questioned if there will be any changes in place to prevent further judgments against the Township, referenced prior lawsuits, and expressed disappointment regarding the Cedar Lane Streetscape.

Howard Rose - 575 Northumberland Road - reminded the public that this is a budget meeting and the public should save their comments that do not concern the budget for a regular meeting, and hoped that Council was working with a zero-based budget.

There having been no further persons who wished to speak, Mayor Feit declared that the public comment portion of the meeting was now closed.

Mayor Feit that explained that the capital appropriation was only removed from the temporary budget and that amount is being held for discussion for this meeting. He explained all the administrative changes Council has made with respect to labor and stated that Council reported on these changes at the December 15th meeting.

DM. Parker concurred and references that such actions resulted in a new insurance policy in place and that this Council only has control over what is currently happening, not what happened in 1996 or 2002.

C. Toffler discussed the Council action item list, which will be reviewed at the first meeting of every month in which the Council is trying to make sure they remember the various things they committed to and this was a step towards responsible government. She recommended that the PAL Building be taken down and asked C. Katz for documentation regarding the \$30,000 cost he cited. She wants to keep the PAL Building removal and landscaping to be kept in mind throughout the budget discussions.

2010 BUDGET PRESENTATION

Mr. Broughton explained the preparation process of the 2010 budget, thanked the department heads, his assistant Kay Ragone, and the Chief Financial Officer, Tony Bianchi for participating in a team effort.

He described the process, which began with the auditor providing revenue and tax levy cap projections, and continued with requests from the department heads, a series of reviews, and public input. The budget is scheduled require introduction by March 10, 2010.

Mr. Broughton provided the 2009 property tax breakdown where 35% of property taxes comprised of the municipal portion, while 56% paid the school district, and 8% was allocated to the county. Based on the projected increase of 4.8%, with no tax levy cap issue, the average assessed home will see a \$154 increase on the municipal portion of their property taxes.

Of the proposed appropriations, he explained that 51% is to be allocated to salary and wages, 29% for other expenses, 3% for debt service, 11% for deferred and statutory expenses, 1% for capital improvements, and 5% for the reserve for uncollected taxes. He then provided a further breakdown of the salary and wages allocation per department.

At this time, he requested that the various department representatives provide an overview of their respective functions.

LEGAL - Mr. Turitz began his description by referencing that the Township has a budget of approximately \$60,000,000 with 375 employees that can go as high as 500 in part-time/seasonal employees, 9 unions, and must adhere to federal, state, county, and local laws. Mr. Turitz explained the Township's self-insurance coverage, as well as tort claims, civil actions, civil rights complaints, tax complaints, general advice, worker's compensation, labor issues, criminal

complaints, and municipal code enforcement. He explained the difference between billable and non-billable hours. He informed Council that he provided to the manager an analysis on three different occasions since 2004 the costs of retaining in-house counsel, which will cost approximately \$1,200,000 to \$1,600,000 for the same level of service. This amount does not include office space for the staff.

FIRE - Chief Montgomery explained the staffing of the fire department in comparison with NFPA standards and the various programs administered by the department, such as the Good Morning program and new safety education trailer that will be shared with Englewood, in addition to emergency response.

POLICE - Chief Wilson compared the 7% reduction in staff with the 12% increase in service calls and that it costs \$84 per month per household to have a police department.

BUILDING - Construction Official Gluck described the 3 components of the department which include the construction permits under the Uniform Construction Code, administration and enforcement of the Township's zoning laws, and Municipal Land Use Law which is administered by the Planning Board and Board of Adjustment. The revenues received in 2009 were better than expected, as the department is required to be self-sufficient under the Uniform Construction Code.

DEPARTMENT OF PUBLIC WORKS/ENGINEERING - Township Engineer McKearnin described the 3 divisions of Public Works, which are the garage, buildings and grounds, and public works. The Engineering Department is a program of the Township's infrastructure, which includes planning, design, and implementation. The Engineering Department also issues site plan approval for development. Superintendent of Public Works Wilson informed Council that the DPW has 15 vacancies and the only division that is fully staff is the garage. He described how he is seeking to revise the recycling program and discussed snow plowing operations.

HEALTH - Acting Health Officer Katter explained the statutory inspections and programs executed by the Health Department, as well as its role in TMAASA and the annual health fair. There are 7 staff members, while other communities that service similar sized populations have a staff of 16 members.

RECREATION - Recreation Superintendent Crockett stated that recreation is the quality of life department of the Township that consists of seasonal programming. The Rodda Center operates 7 days a week during days, evenings, weekends, and holidays. The 4 components of this department are the Youth Division, Senior Division, transportation for seniors and the disabled, and community programs. In 2009, the department faced a 40% reduction in full-time staff.

CLERK - Municipal Clerk Aportela-Hernandez provided details regarding the department's role in preparing for Council meetings, codification of the municipal code, OPRAs, various licensing functions and complying with Title 19 and 40:45 as well as the federal Help America Vote Act with respect to elections. She explained that the Clerk's operating budget increases substantially every other year due to the cost of the Municipal Election and possible changes under recent state legislation.

FINANCE - Chief Financial Officer Bianchi stated that the Finance Department consists of 10 individuals working as the Registrar, Tax Collection which includes a full-time employee who was reduced to part-time status, payroll, an accountant that processes payables, and the MIS component that oversees the municipal computer system.

ASSESSOR - Tax Assessor Tighe explained his role in ensuring the equitable distribution of the tax burden among 12,000 properties, conducting added assessments based on construction, and defending the Township at tax appeal hearings. He described the impact of the revaluation and state of the housing market.

PURCHASING - Purchasing Agent Lynch mentioned that his main purpose is procurement and ensuring the departments are supplied with the equipment and services required to execute their functions in a timely, legal, and economic fashion. In conjunction with the CFO, he oversees the budget to ensure there are no overages, is the accounts payable liaison, ensures compliance with the local public contracts law, conducts the public auction, prepares bid specifications, and is the Township Public Agency Compliance Officer. In 2009 the Purchasing Department processed 1800 requisitions and 1300 purchase orders.

COURT - Court Administrator Graham reported that the 7 member staff 133 court sessions last year, processed 20,000 traffic cases, and 1,000 criminal cases. Teaneck Municipal Court ranks as the 4th busiest in Bergen County.

At this time, Council recessed at 9:22 p.m. and reconvened at 9:32 p.m.

Mr. Broughton continued with his presentation on the 2010 Budget.

He reported that 94% of all salaries are under contract. His staffing recommendations include filling some of the vacant positions at the Department of Public Works with the enhancement of the recycling program; having 99 sworn officers in the Police Department and reinstate community policing; maintaining 93 members of the Fire Department, including 2 Deputy Chiefs and 4 Battalion Chiefs; hiring a Human Resource Officer at \$80,000 and an Executive Assistant at \$60,000 for the Manager's Office; funding terminal leave at \$250,000; and allocating the following for overtime: \$320,000 - DPW, \$300,000 - Fire, and \$350,000 - Police.

Mr. Broughton highlighted increases in the Other Expenses budget, which includes \$184,000 to purchase 6 police cars on an annual basis, a 91.85% in the Clerk's budget for the 2010 Municipal Election, a 3.27% increase in DPW, 10.5% for fire hydrant service, and 21.02% for the Police Department. Debt Service increased by 10.8% for the bond and loan interest on the Rodda Center and Police Headquarters. Deferred and Statutory expenses increased 11% to cover pensions, Social Security benefits, and unemployment insurance. He budgeted \$439,025 in the Capital Improvement Fund, which reflects the required 5% down payment for \$6,286,658 worth of projects. He encouraged Council to pursue financing while interest rates are at a historic low.

Mr. Broughton focused on the revenue portion of the municipal budget, which is comprised of that tax levy at 78%, surplus at 7%, state revenue at 7%, local revenue at 8%, and delinquent taxes at 2%. He explained that methods to generate revenues include enhancing existing rates, acquiring new rates, and sharing or selling services. He advised that factors impacting the budget include the economy, tax appeals, interest rates, state aid and binding arbitration. His initiatives include increasing revenues through advertisement space which provides \$500,000 initially and \$60,000 annually and selling municipally owned properties. Other initiatives included shared services, cost containment, consolidating positions, emergency services dispatch, capital improvements, and debt analysis and refinancing.

In conclusion, Mr. Broughton presented a budget of \$64,128,282 for 2010.

Mayor Feit described the presentation by the manager and department heads as helpful. The presentations will assist the Council to make more informed decisions. Council will review the budget line by line beginning at the next budget meeting on Thursday, January 21st. He urged all Councilmembers to review the budget thoroughly in preparation for the next meeting.

ADJOURNMENT

C. Gussen moved to adjourn the Budget Meeting at 9:56 p.m. Seconded by C. Honis. .

In Favor: C. Gussen, C. Hameeduddin, DM. Parker, C. Honis, C. Toffler, Mayor Feit.

Opposed: None.

Absent: C. Katz.