

**HOPEWELL TOWNSHIP COMMITTEE SPECIAL BUDGET MEETING
VIA ZOOM VIDEO COMMUNICATIONS**

Thursday, April 2, 2020 – 3:31 p.m.

PROPER STATEMENT OF NOTICE – Mayor McLaughlin called the meeting to order stating that notice of the meeting had been posted on the municipal bulletin board and forwarded to the Hopewell Valley News, The Times, the Trentonian and the Hopewell Express (the official newspapers) on March 31, 2020, in accordance with the Open Public Meetings Act, Chapter 231, P.L. 1975.

ROLL CALL: Those answering the roll call of the Municipal Clerk:

COMMITTEE MEMBERS PRESENT: Blake, Kuchinski, Peters-Manning, Ruger, Mayor McLaughlin

ABSENT: None

STAFF PRESENT: Administrator/CFO Borges, Municipal Clerk Gompf, Director of Community Development/Engineer Kataryniak, Township Attorney Goodell

2020 MUNICIPAL BUDGET DISCUSSION

Mayor McLaughlin explained that the meeting was being held over the internet via Zoom in order to comply with the State's stay at home orders and then turned the meeting over to Committee Member Kuchinski and Ms. Borges.

Committee Member Kuchinski explained that during the meeting the Township Committee will be reviewing departmental budgets; the Brandon Farms utility; the Princeton Farms utility; would not reviewing the Washington Crossing Estates utility until a subsequent meeting; and provided an overview regarding the State's provision to delay the introduction of the budget.

Ms. Borges reviewed the following in the Executive Budget:

- Additional funds added for COVID-19 preparedness.
- Additional funding for the salary audit.
- Explained the additional funds in the salary line item.
- Discussed Federal and State Aid.
- Estimated tax bills will need to be sent this year.

A discussion ensued regarding staffing vacant and newly created positions.

Ms. Borges reviewed the following in the Financial Administration Budget:

- The GASB Actuarial Services footnote is not required this year therefore funding for it has been removed from the budget.
- Adjustments may need to be made to the budget due to a note sale.

Ms. Borges reviewed the Township Committee's Budget which included two requests made by Committee Member Blake for the Green Team and Have Your Say Hopewell.

Ms. Borges explained that the surplus usage in the Brandon Farms Utility will be down this year; revenue was up; investments are about the same; the budget is consistent with last year's; and debt service and interest were reviewed. Committee Member Kuchinski reminded the Committee that all Township utilities are self-funded and that Public Works staff maintain the Township's portion of those utilities. Committee Members questioned the amount allotted for pumping services.

Ms. Borges discussed the Princeton Farms Utility Budget as follows:

- Princeton Farms did not meet their revenue projection last year.
- More surplus is being used to balance the budget to avoid a rate increase.
- The increase is likely due to infiltration in the system.
- Additional funding was added to allow for Suburban Engineering to check the remainder of the system for infiltration.
- Principle payments are increasing.
- Interest payments are decreasing.

Committee Member Kuchinski asked Committee Members to scrutinize the budget and make recommendations to Ms. Borges before the introduction of the budget.

Committee Members urged anyone interested in finding out the latest on COVID-19 go to the Township's website; to also support local business; and additional information regarding State assistance has been posted on the website.

PUBLIC SECTION

The following members of the public spoke during public comment:

Cheryl Edwards, a resident of Pennington Harbourton Road, questioned if taxes may be paid through the mail, online and in person.

The detailed public comment may be viewed at www.hopewelltp.org in the video library.

At 4:01 p.m., motion by Ruger, seconded by Blake to adjourn the meeting.

MOTION UNANIMOUSLY CARRIED

The detailed public meeting may be viewed at www.hopewelltp.org in the video library.

LAURIE E. GOMPF
MUNICIPAL CLERK