

**HOPEWELL TOWNSHIP COMMITTEE SPECIAL MEETING
HOPEWELL TOWNSHIP MUNICIPAL BUILDING AUDITORIUM**

Monday, February 8, 2016 – 6:26 p.m.

PROPER STATEMENT OF NOTICE - Mayor Kuchinski 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 February 5, 2016, 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, Brant, Hart, Sandom, Mayor Kuchinski

ABSENT: None

STAFF PRESENT: Administrator/Engineer Pogorzelski, CFO Borges, Municipal Clerk Gompf

ALSO PRESENT: Chief Maloney, Lieutenant Springer, Finance Advisory Committee Members: Thomas Welsh, Kim Robinson, Alexander Botero

2016 MUNICIPAL BUDGET DISCUSSION

Ms. Borges recapped the following changes to the 2016 Capital Budget discussed at the previous budget meeting:

- Removal of one (1) dump truck, back hoe, refuse truck, crack filling machine, jetter/vacuum truck, animal control vehicle, printer, and plotter
- Additional \$20,000 for security cameras
- Additional \$70,000 for affordable housing litigation
- Reduction in debt service due to cancellation of outstanding notes
- Reduction for tree maintenance and road striping
- Reduction in Public Works' equipment maintenance and rental, and dues
- Reduction in Building and Grounds maintenance services and equipment maintenance
- Reduction in fleet fuel
- Increase in Public Works' fleet maintenance for jetter/vacuum truck and dump truck repairs
- Increase in down payment for equipment with useful life of five (5) years to 10% from 5%
- Increase in salary/wages for part-time senior services and interim public works director
- Percentage increase for calculation of reserve for uncollected taxes to 98.6%

Ms. Borges explained the impact of cancelling outstanding notes and principal payments on the 2016 municipal budget including tax rate.

Township Committee and Finance Advisory Committee Members raised questions and concerns regarding the significant reduction in the cost for contracted tree removal services proposed during the previous budget discussion.

Mr. Pogorzelski clarified the Township's mandatory obligation to maintain trees in public right of ways and explained that despite a limited Public Works fleet, the Township is still responsible for removal of dead trees in a timely manner. Mr. Pogorzelski also commented on the significant impact of the Ash Borer on Township trees. He advised that efforts are underway for a potential statewide cooperative with PSE&G and JCP&L for removal services, as the New Jersey Department of Transportation recommends clear cutting all of the ash trees, as many are expected to die over the next couple of years as a result of such infestation.

Discussion continued regarding prioritization of the Police Department's 2016 Capital Budget requests.

Hopewell Township Police Chief, Lance Maloney, reviewed the following items in priority order:

- Replacement of one (1) retiring sergeant
- Departmental accreditation
- Vehicle replacements
- Replacement of one (1) dispatcher
- Body camera system
- Hiring of one (1) patrol officer

Committee Members raised questions regarding benefits to the Township of Accreditation; asked for clarification of the police vehicle purchase in the Operating Budget and for further explanation of the increased amounts for supplies and minor equipment, training and dues, uniforms, rentals, and range repair and usage.

During the discussion, Chief Maloney explained that the 2016 proposed budget increases are due to costs associated with the Accreditation program. Chief Maloney also addressed queries regarding benefits of the Accreditation including insurance savings and legal defense against potential future litigation; and also explained that sports utility type vehicles (SUVs) are Capital purchases, therefore requests for patrol vehicles are included in the Operating Budget. Ms. Borges further clarified that according to New Jersey Bond Law, the purchase of SUVs are part of the Capital Budget.

Committee Member Brant commented on the poor condition of the fleet of Police vehicles.

Chief Maloney addressed the query regarding uniforms explaining that uniform allowance and dry cleaning is included in the union contracts. Ms. Borges continued that uniform cleaning is a contracted service which is also provided to the fire department on a reimbursement basis and includes items other than uniforms and jackets such as blankets. She explained that the departments are exposed to hazardous body contaminants.

Lieutenant Springer addressed concerns raised regarding rentals explaining that the proposed amount reflects the potential rental fees that the Township may incur from radio cell tower usage. He continued to explain that the Township currently utilizes four (4) active cell towers free of charge and that could change at any time.

Discussion was held regarding language of future cell tower usage agreements; rental revenue from the Twin Pines cell tower; placement and usage of cell towers on Township-owned property; and high cost for ammunition.

During the discussion, Mr. Pogorzelski spoke about the potential revenue options from the Twin Pines tower including a "cash out" option resulting in a one-time usage fee. Chief Maloney also explained that the proposed amount regarding range repair included the cost of ammunition.

It was the consensus of the Committee to continue discussion of the Police Department's proposed 2016 Capital Budget requests in closed session.

At this time, Committee Member Brant asked for clarification of the proposed percentage for the reserve for uncollected taxes; and inquired about County approval of such.

Ms. Borges explained the law regarding the determination of the tax collection rate, the reserve for uncollected taxes, and the impact on surplus. She continued that the largest percentage rate that can be used is 99.2% and that the difference between the reserve calculation and the tax collection rate is the amount reserved for tax payers who don't pay. Ms. Borges added that the County has no input on the percentage rate and the Township is still obligated to provide the funding regardless of tax collections.

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

PUBLIC SECTION

No comments from the public.

At 7:05 p.m., Motion by Sandom, seconded by Hart to adjourn the meeting.

MOTION UNANIMOUSLY CARRIED

LAUIRE E. GOMPF
MUNICIPAL CLERK