

# Hopewell Township Finance Advisory Committee

Municipal Building Conference Room  
September 3, 2015

Vice Chairman Sauer called the meeting to order at 7:00 p.m.

**Members Present:** Sauer, Clawson, Colina, Downey, Robinson (Alternate)

**Members Absent:** Welsh, Guleria (Alternate)

**Staff Present:** Borges

**HTC Liaisons Present:** Lester

**HTC Liaison Absent:** Kuchinski

## **Prior Minutes**

The draft of the minutes of the August 6, 2016 FAC meeting was introduced. Clawson moved to approve this draft. This motion was seconded by Colina. The minutes were approved by 2 to 0 vote, by Clawson and Robinson who attended the August 6th meeting. Colina, Downey, and Sauer abstained from voting as they had not attended the August 6th FAC meeting.

## **Posting of Minutes and Agendas of the FAC**

Downey spoke about the fact that inquiries had been received about where the minutes of the FAC meeting were posted and why were agendas not posted prior to meetings. Downey replied that the audio recording of previous meetings, as long as the recording was successfully made, was being posted by Borges to the Hopewell Township website. On the home page of the Hopewell Township webpage there is a box on the lower right indicating where to click to look for the audio recording. When one clicks on that icon, then a list of the audio recordings appears. Clicking on the line for the FAC, brings up a list of recordings of prior meetings.

However, neither the minutes nor the agendas for previous FAC meetings have been posted to the website. One reason for this is that there is not a category listing on either the Financial section of the Hopewell Township website or under the Document Heading for minutes and agendas. Downey had spoken to Paul Pogorzelski about creating the appropriate entries. He indicated that this would be done. He also indicated that Laurie the clerk can post the minutes to the website once these categories are created.

To be able to post agendas on the website, agendas would need to be put together in a more timely fashion. It was agreed that the secretary will poll members for attendance a week ahead of the scheduled FAC meeting in order to determine sooner if a quorum is available. Then the secretary would contact the likely chair, based on likely attendance

for the upcoming FAC meeting to assign responsibility for creating an agenda for the upcoming meeting.

Borges then indicated that relative to the August FAC recommendation to raise the fee for birth certificates to \$25.00, that the Hopewell Township administrator Pogozelski had indicated that he had a concern about whether the fees had to be justified in terms of the actual cost of service. Borges believed that an opinion on this issue was being sought from the Hopewell Township attorney Steve Goodell.

Vice Chairman Sauer then initiated a discussion about whether the fee for issuing a Death Certificate should be raised. Review of the fees that other municipalities are charging for Death Certificates from the spreadsheet put together by Sauer in the summer indicated that other municipalities are charging \$25.00 when Hopewell Township is only charging \$10.00. Then reference was made to the memo from Health Officer Bob English in which he was recommending a raise in the death certificate fee to at least \$20.00. After general discussion among the committee members that raising the fee to \$25.00 seemed appropriate, Downey made a motion to raise the fee charged for death certificates from \$10.00 to \$25.00. This motion was seconded by John Clawson. Then it was adopted by the FAC based a unanimous vote to do so.

The question was then raised whether the charge for duplicate death certificates should be raised from its current level of \$10.00. After general discussion and based on the recommendation in Health Officer's Bob English's memo to not raise the fee for duplication death certificates due to the relative ease of generating these with the current system, the committee decided to leave the fee for a duplicate death certificate unchanged.

Borges committed to trying to identify which of the nine previous revisions, made from 1995 to 2010, to the ordinance setting Vital Statistics Record Fees had set both the birth certificate fee and the death certificate fee at the \$10.00 level. The committee members thought that this would be useful information in writing the memorandum to the Hopewell Township committee recommending raising these fees. The last revision to this ordinance was in 2010 and Borges thought that this reflected only a language change to include domestic partnerships and civil unions.

In terms of the next step Vice Chairman Sauer committed to working with Chairman Tom Welsh to put together a draft version of the memorandum to be subsequently forwarded to the Hopewell Township Committee for review at the October 1st meeting of the FAC.

### **Next Meeting**

The next meeting of the Finance Advisory Committee is scheduled for October 1st at 7:00 pm. Sauer asked the members about their availability for the October 1st meeting. Most members indicated that at this point in time they were available.

### **Public Session**

Vice Chairman Sauer opened the meeting to the public. Vanessa Sandom asked questions about the budget process as to when it would begin and whether the FAC members wanted to be involved in the process. Borges briefly reviewed the general

issues facing Hopewell Township in the budget process this year and the additional requirements that the state of New Jersey is making this year. In addition this coming budget will be one that is up for review by the state in contrast to the last two years when it was not.

Since the Hopewell Township Committee sets the dates for the budget process review, it was beyond purview of the FAC to be able to set dates. It was generally agreed that the FAC members would like to be included when the Hopewell Township Committee reviews the budget for 2016. The Public Session was closed based on a motion by Downey, seconded by Clawson, and unanimously approved to close the public session.

### **Adjournment**

A motion was made for adjournment by Downey, seconded by Clawson, and unanimously approved. The meeting was adjourned at 8:02 pm.

Respectfully submitted,

Gale Downey  
Secretary  
Finance Advisory Committee.