

Hopewell Township Finance Advisory Committee

Township Municipal Building
May 16, 2016

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

Members Present: Welsh, Sauer, Colina, Robinson, Botero, Guleria

Members Absent: Downey

Staff Present: Borges

HTC Liaisons Present: Brant

Prior Minutes

Minutes from the April 18, 2016 meeting were approved unanimously. Outstanding minutes from November 5, 2015 and March 21, 2016 were not available for review. Unreviewed minutes will be reviewed at the next meeting.

Fee Recommendations

The Committee continued discussion of fee recommendations proposed by Police Chief Lance Maloney at the April 18, 2016 meeting.

1. Regarding the proposed \$30 fee to register an alarm system, cost data was reviewed which indicated a cost of \$19, not including overhead. Given an estimated 20% additional cost for overhead and pension (approx.. \$2), the committee felt unanimously that a fee of \$20 was more appropriate and recommended.
2. Regarding the proposed \$400 application fee for municipal towing, the committee agreed unanimously that \$400 was appropriate based on the cost figures provided.
3. Regarding the proposed \$100 fee for towing operators to remain on the towing rotation list, the committee agreed unanimously that \$100 was appropriate based on the cost figures provided.
4. Regarding the \$5 increase for the Deer Management Hunting Permit Safety Training, the Committee chose to postpone a recommendation pending Ms. Borges obtaining additional information regarding where the fees go. (In the past, the Police Dept received \$25 of the \$100 charged.)

5. Regarding the proposed \$5 fee for “Letters of Good Standing”, the committee agreed unanimously that \$5 was appropriate based on the cost data provided.
6. Regarding the proposed increase to \$25 for an annual Solicitor’s fee, the committee chose to postpone a recommendation pending further information gathering regarding such fees in other towns, specifically in the boroughs.
7. Regarding the proposed fines for false burglar alarms, beginning with the third false alarm in a calendar year, the committee agreed unanimously that the fines as currently proposed are appropriate. (Third false alarm - \$50, fourth - \$75, and fifth and more - \$100 each.)

Grants

Ms. Borges reviewed the current process related to grants: Mr. Pogorzelski receives a list of grants available from a grant-writing service on a quarterly or monthly basis. This service recommends that a grant writer be involved if the Township applies for a grant; the grant writer normally charges around 10%, regardless of whether or not the grant is obtained. Ms. Borges indicated that grants are usually only used on large capital projects (\$200K +). She also noted that DOT grants are handled through Engineering. Mr. Welsh asked that the grant lists received be distributed to the FAC, the HTC, and the department heads going forward. The Committee will review/discuss the current list at the next meeting.

Annual Budget Objectives.

1. Township Debt Service

Prior to the meeting, Ms. Borges had distributed a Capital and Debt policy document produced by Princeton’s Finance Advisory Committee with assistance from Phoenix Advisors, a company used by Hopewell Twp for bond issues. Mr. Brant suggested that rules and principals such as Princeton’s could be laid out for the Hopewell Twp Committee as well in a document produced by Hopewell Twp’s FAC, with possible assistance from Phoenix for the benchmarking. The committee found the document to be well done and very useful, and members were encouraged to review it for discussion at the next meeting.

2. Fleet Management/Capital Budget

Ms. Borges distributed a capital history spreadsheet, recently created with assistance from Public Works Director Pete Van Hise and Police Lt. Springer. The spreadsheet lists all capital items, with the year replaced or year scheduled for replacement (2011 – 2022). It was noted that this spreadsheet is a work in process, with plans for more data to be added such as legal useful life and vehicle mileage. The committee agreed that it will be a useful tool.

Next Meeting

The next FAC meeting is scheduled for Monday, June 20th at 7:00 p.m. It was also noted that the Township Committee has invited members of the FAC to attend the Township Committee meeting on Monday, June 13th during which the Township's Bulky Waste service will be discussed.

Public Comment

Chair Welsh opened the meeting for public comment. Vanessa Sandom asked for a copy of the capital spreadsheet and was provided one. There were no other public comments and the meeting was closed to public comment.

Adjournment

The meeting was adjourned by unanimous vote at 8:15 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Kim Robinson, Alt. Rec. Secretary
HT Finance Advisory Committee.