
TOWNSHIP OF WEST MILFORD, COUNTY OF PASSAIC, NEW JERSEY

Minutes of: Township Council Special Meeting
Date of Meeting: January 9, 2015
Time of Meeting: 6:00 P.M.
Minute Page No: Page 1 of 4

Mayor Bettina Bieri called the Special Meeting of the West Milford Township Council to order.

Adequate Notice Statement

Mayor Bieri read the following statement:

Please note that in accordance with Chapter 231, Public Laws of 1975 of New Jersey, adequate advance notice of this Special meeting was published in the Herald News on December 28, 2014; copies were provided to the Record, Star Ledger, Suburban Trends and posted continuously on the bulletin board in the main corridor of the Town Hall and on file in the Office of the Township Clerk.

Please also make note of all fire and emergency exits – located to the left, right, and rear of this room - for use in case of an emergency. Thank you.

Pledge of Allegiance

Mayor Bieri led all in attendance in a salute to the flag.

Roll Call

Present: Councilmembers Ada Erik (arrived at 6:06 pm), Michael Hensley (arrived at 6:16 pm), Vivienne Erk, Michele Dale, Luciano Signorino, Marilyn Lichtenberg, Mayor Bettina Bieri.
Absent: None.
Also Present: Township Administrator Kenneth Gabbert, Township Clerk Antoinette Battaglia, Chief of Police Timothy Storbeck, Michael Moscatello, Fire Marshal

Agenda No. II

Purpose

Review of the proposed 2015 Municipal Budget.

Agenda No. III

Review of 2015 Municipal Budget

Overview – Administrator Gabbert said staff began working on budget preparation in September last year. He then met with each department. He commended the department heads noting that, in his opinion, the budgets submitted were bare bones. He took a hard look at each budget submission. Council will receive copies of the budget requests along with his recommendations. He distributed an updated organizational chart. He said that review of the organizational chart will help Council understand the process better. He distributed an overview by department, of staffing levels with a history back to 2010. He noted full time staff is down 14.1% and part time is up as is seasonal. The drop in full time personnel is significant because there are savings in both salary & benefits. That equates to over \$1.4 million savings. This document will help Council when department heads discuss the staffing reductions in their respective departments. He said the software approved by Council in September is being used in this budget process. He is still in the process of getting the software aligned with our actual needs. He & the CFO also have the MSI reports which have been modified in an effort to provide requested information.

Administrator Gabbert gave a broad overview of the budget saying that requests are 8.3% over last year. Revenue is projected to be slightly up. The proposed amount to be raised by taxes at this time is up \$1.2 million. It is not his goal to present a budget up 6.2%. He cannot do that now given that there are expected increases in CS&R. The end of year surplus is \$2.9 million. His estimate for using surplus is consequently high. It is difficult to increase revenue but he is estimating an increase in revenue.

Administrator Gabbert said that the Township can estimate FEMA reimbursements at \$140,000 in the 2015 budget. There may be more and as soon as we can confirm that those funds will be sent to West Milford we can estimate those in the budget. Those funds were expended and the revenue will be used to pay off that debt. There will be discussion of some restructuring in the health & tax departments. He advised that Captain Richard Fiorillo has notified the Township that he will retire on April 1st. As a result, there will be savings in operations but there will be a cost in the payouts and in this instance it may be close to \$80,000. Administrator Gabbert distributed revenue information noting that it is not likely to change. He distributed information about expenses by department showing comparisons from 2013 and 2014. There may be some adjustments in the 2014 amounts but it is close. The 2015 requests are also outlined as well as the administrator's recommendations. The data shows both dollar amounts and percentage increases or decreases. He will be referring to those documents at various times. He said the Council may be tempted to delve into every line item but he would advise them that it may be more beneficial to focus on areas that may require cuts. He would rather have Council determine the amount of cuts and let the department head make the decision as to where the cut will ultimately be made. He said this is a tight budget cycle. The police salary & wages are complete because the contract expires at the end of 2015. The other departments are mainly flat and he has held 2.5% in reserves in another account until negotiations have been concluded. The final outcome will be dependent on what trade offs

TOWNSHIP OF WEST MILFORD, COUNTY OF PASSAIC, NEW JERSEY

Minutes of: Township Council Special Meeting
Date of Meeting: January 9, 2015
Time of Meeting: 6:00 P.M.
Minute Page No: Page 2 of 4

are made in negotiations. He clarified that he is not recommending a 2.5% increase. These funds are being held in reserve in case it becomes necessary to fund any 2015 obligation.

2015 Police Department Budget Request –

Chief Storbeck addressed the Council. He said this is the third budget he has been involved in. He would like to see manpower restored to 46 officers as recommended by the FBI-Leeda study. This would allow the police department to operate proactively instead of reactively. While the department has managed to work on community policing and the REAL program, manpower issues have created limited ability to fully engage these programs. He said that officers come in on off days on overtime to staff the REAL program simply because there is not sufficient staff to run the programs. He reviewed the number of schools & classes & scheduling that is required for these programs. He said two officers are eligible to retire this year and a captain has submitted a formal letter. He is now looking to replace Lieutenant Matarese who retired last year. The next academy is starting in April. A patrol officer is eligible to retire on July 29 and while he has indicated that he plans to do so, he has not submitted paperwork at this time. Chief Storbeck said that there are now 43 officers and he explained that it takes about 3 months to select candidates for the academy. He reviewed the process. Councilwoman Dale asked if analyses are done when someone retires as to what the savings are. Administrator said the savings in the higher ranks are minimal. Councilwoman Dale said S&W line items should be reduced as retirements occur. Administrator Gabbert agreed adding that there will be adjustments because the new patrol officer will not start academy until April. He said he may seek to have entry level salaries lowered before a new officer is hired by trying to negotiate that with the PBA. He said he has done that in another town resulting in a \$170,000 reduction in lifetime earnings for an officer. He said that the savings will be eaten up with overtime if the staffing issues are not addressed. Chief Storbeck said he is looking for 46 officers up from current levels of 43. He said he has tried to keep the budget at a minimal increase. He initially proposed a 40% increase and has reduced that significantly. Mayor Bieri clarified that in terms of budgeting, rather than actual staffing, the Chief is seeking funding for 2 additional officers. She said 44 are budgeted for and the Chief is asking for an additional 2.

Chief Storbeck directed Council to requested appropriations for technical supplies noting that some supplies are quite expensive. He said there is a \$7,000 requested increase for mobile data terminals (MDT), computers in cars, which allows officers to do reports & paperwork in cars rather than having to return to the office to do these reports. We currently have MDTs in cars but without the software they often lose data when it is being transmitted because the signals are poor. This will save the data if there is a disconnect which will allow it to be sent later. Also the disconnects often cause the computers to shut down. Councilman Signorino asked about the \$14,000 request for ammunition. Chief Storbeck said that this amount is based on actual usage and increases are based on cost increases. Discussion ensued about the department's ability to spend funds from subaccounts. Chief Storbeck said he is just focusing on new requests or significant increases. Councilman Signorino asked if the police department actively seeks grant funds. Chief Storbeck said they constantly monitor grant opportunities and apply for what they can. Councilman Signorino asked Administrator Gabbert to delineate when grants have been used in the past to offset costs. CFO Goscicki said that grant monies are used when spent and as such they are not part of the budget request. Chief Storbeck said the software is desired but they have been living without it. Councilwoman Dale asked what else the chief could live without. She asked that in the future departments prioritize their requests. Mayor Bieri said that is why the Administrator is asking Council to determine an overall amount to cut and then leave it to the discretion of the departments as to how those funds would be expended. Chief Storbeck said the Administrator has already made cuts to his requests. Mayor Bieri asked if patrol officers get overtime to regenerate reports that are lost with the disconnection of the MDT. Chief Storbeck said only if it is a critical report. Discussion ensued about the many advantages and uses for the MDTs. Chief Storbeck said the \$7,000 is a one time cost and from there it would be a minimum cost to maintain the software. Councilman Hensley said he would like to know the full extent of the capabilities of the software.

Chief Storbeck said he has requested increased funding for community policing. CASA grant funds previously used for this purpose have been reduced warranting municipal funding for the REAL program and other community outreach programs.

Chief Storbeck said he has requested an increase in the line item titled "fees for services". This proposed increase would fund the physiological & medical examinations for new hires. The funds are also used for the maintenance for the Polaris, which is an ATV style vehicle used for events and which was purchased through grants. Chief said each of these items are priorities.

Chief Storbeck said there is one new item requested under funding for maintenance contracts. In addition to the existing maintenance contracts he would like to obtain a maintenance contract for the email system. The system, he said, is getting old and there are some areas that have to be secured to

TOWNSHIP OF WEST MILFORD, COUNTY OF PASSAIC, NEW JERSEY

Minutes of: Township Council Special Meeting
Date of Meeting: January 9, 2015
Time of Meeting: 6:00 P.M.
Minute Page No: Page 3 of 4

comply with judicial requirements. A new system would cost about \$20,000 - \$30,000 with a five year life. He is requesting a system that would provide encryptions through the cloud and it is acceptable to the state police. The network administrator recommends it because it is constantly upgraded. The company is responsible for the upgrades & maintenance. Chief Storbeck explained the various software programs in his department saying that the cost for 911 maintenance & material is an estimate. There are continual updates. We maintain this on time & material because the companies want to charge \$20,000 for maintenance contracts. Our system is now 5 years old and Verizon no longer services the equipment. He reviewed the Township's MICOM agreement.

Chief Storbeck said the budget request for vehicles has changed a number of times since the beginning of the budget process. One SUV obtained from Passaic County has issues with the frame. That increased his new vehicle request from 5 to 6. He is requesting small SUVs and they have proven to be the most cost effective and reliable vehicles. AWD is better for this terrain. He explained the rotations for service and the manner in which vehicles are scheduled for use. Front line cars last about 2 years and log over 100,000 miles. Efforts are made to keep mileage uniform among vehicles. Back line cars are generally older and have more limited use. Councilwoman Dale said Council asked for a full report of all vehicles in the town. She asked the Chief to provide that report for all police vehicles. Administrator Gabbert said he will get that list. Councilman Signorino asked for the maintenance records & costs for each of the vehicles. Administrator Gabbert said that is difficult to compile but he has asked the department to track that going forward. He said there is a lot of maintenance for police vehicles because of mileage. He said he is looking at outsourcing the minimal maintenance like oil changes. Councilman Signorino said he likes to focus on the public image of the police department. He said that we always get standard vehicles and have the lettering done later which is a good thing. Council agreed they like the new black & gold lettering. Administrator Gabbert said with the budget this year we may have to fund vehicles through capital although he does not recommend not purchasing. Last year the Township purchased 4 vehicles from the operating budget. Chief Storbeck said we now invest in undercoating to provide longer life on vehicles. Councilman Signorino asked if staffing affects vehicle needs. Chief Storbeck answered only in the short term but not in the long term. Discussion ensued about how long it takes to actually realize the purchase of vehicles.

Councilwoman Dale asked about police patrol overtime. Chief Storbeck said part of those expenses include additional training to address new societal issues. Councilwoman Dale said that recommendations from the FBI-Leeda study are not being followed. That report said management of overtime and extra services we offer that are not generally offered such as the dive team should be analyzed. She suggests an analysis of those services and suggested that the Chief prioritize where the best investment is. She said that if the Chief can justify a program such as the dive team she would reconsider. Chief Storbeck said our special operation unit used to have a dive team. That is combined with the recovery team now. They do get special training and the officers do make concessions to take these courses. Councilwoman Dale said there may be other services that would be more appropriate. Chief Storbeck said we provide these services to other towns and in exchange we get special services from them such as use of a canine unit. He reviewed some other services. He expressed concern about relying on the county as primary responder for dive teams and emergency needs. The county does assist but they take a long time to get here. Discussion ensued about marine units and patrols on local lakes. Councilwoman Dale said the FBI-Leeda report made recommendations that we study the department. She said we cannot only focus on the staffing recommendation without looking at the other recommendations contained in the report. She does not see that all recommendations in the report have been followed and she asked the Chief to look at that.

Mayor Bieri asked Chief Storbeck to explain the difference between an active shooter and a SWAT team. Chief Storbeck said an active shooter responds to an immediate situation. A SWAT team is dispatched for long-term situations. Councilman Hensley asked if there is the possibility to engage in a shared services potential for certain of these services. Chief Storbeck said that is covered in the mutual aid standards that are adhered to with law enforcement agencies. We don't charge for mutual aid because we seek services too. Councilwoman Dale asked about police patrol clothing allowance and the requested increase. Chief Storbeck said this is contractual for existing personnel and he has requested funding for new hires. Council gave consensus to fill vacancies created by retirements in the police department. Administrator Gabbert asked about two new additional officers. Councilwoman Erik said that will cut down on overtime and Councilman Signorino said he is not interested at this time. Mayor Bieri asked for an analysis and Councilwoman Dale said she is open if there is an analysis and a renewed review of the FBI-Leeda report. She needs more data and information before she can say yes.

2015 Fire Division Budget Request – Fire Marshall Mike Moscatello addressed the Council. Councilwoman Dale commended Mr. Moscatello for doing a fine job saying she has heard great things about him. Administrator Gabbert agreed and said he and the chief are impressed with his attention to detail and dedication to his job.

