
TOWNSHIP OF WEST MILFORD, COUNTY OF PASSAIC, NEW JERSEY

Minutes of: Township Council Special Meeting
Date of Meeting: January 20, 2011
Time of Meeting: 7:00 P.M.
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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 transmitted to the Herald News on January 9, 2011; copies were provided to the Record, Star Ledger, Suburban Trends and Greenwood Lake News 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 Philip Weisbecker, Joseph Smolinski, Michael Ramaglia, Edward Rosone, Luciano Signorino, Daniel Jurkovic, Mayor Bettina Bieri.
Absent: None.
Also Present: Township Administrator Kevin Boyle, Township Clerk Antoinette Battaglia, Chief Financial Officer Arthur Magnotti.

Agenda No. II

Purpose

Review of the proposed 2011 Municipal Budget.

Budget Overview

Formal action may be taken at this meeting.

Agenda No. III

Review of 2011 Municipal Budget

Mayor Bieri deferred to Administrator Boyle who advised that the budget books went out this weekend in accordance with the law. Without revenue numbers we cannot determine the tax rate. However the auditors are working on bank statements and hoping to have those numbers by the February 9th meeting. He provided a summary of capital items stating that we can only bond \$2 million this year and can use capital improvement money. He stated that his goal has been to improve pay as you go practices. We will also look at old capital ordinances to see if there is additional funding there to be reallocated for capital projects. He thanked Julie Zeltner from the finance department for doing such a great job especially without a CFO and dealing with the budget in addition to her day-to-day responsibilities. He stated that he is proud of staff.

Mr. Boyle directed Council to capital documents advising that there is a \$7,000 appropriation to improve the network fire wall. Although there is a request for \$20,000 for computers, he will seek to reduce that number. We purchase Dell computers through state contract. Councilman Weisbecker asked what it would cost to purchase laptops for the Mayor & Council instead of having a paper system. Mr. Boyle will research that and report back. He advised Council that the Director of CS&R is seeking \$47,500 for the roller hockey rink and is also seeking grant money for this project too. The appropriation is a safeguard in case we do not get grant funding from the County. The Director of CS&R is also seeking capital funds for athletic field rehabilitation and it is hoped that the new turf field we will minimize impact on Farrell Field.

Mr. Boyle advised that the Engineering Department is seeking \$415,000 to proceed with the Otterhole Road project for which we got \$200,000 from DOT. We must award this contract by June 24th. He stated that he is hoping to see competitive bids for this because contractors are hungry for work. County engineer recommended a number of changes for the Marshall Hill sidewalk so we will apply for further grant monies to cover those costs and the County will pay for paving. However, he said the Township needs to appropriate some capital funds. The Engineering Department was seeking \$1.1 million for road resurfacing but this cannot happen this year with a limit of \$2 million. We will use monies left over from last year instead. He stated that the Township will need to increase these appropriations at some time in the future. Mr. Boyle advised that West Milford's bond rating has not been downgraded. The Engineering Department is also seeking to repair the High Crest bridge which is in bad shape and are hoping to save money as a result of engineering and design. He plans to meet with the association's

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board because they have a spillway there as part of the dam. The Bubbling Springs lower dam is in need of repair to the low level outlet and concrete repairs. He is seeking \$25,000 because we have already gotten DEP extensions. Rockburn Pass is a \$75,000 allocation because this project will involve a lot of rock removal. He suggested that it be best to defer this project which is not critical.

Mr. Boyle advised that the Fire Department is seeking \$60,000 for equipment replacement and are hoping to outfit an SUV donated by the County for \$15,000. The Council had some questions and discussion about vehicle rotation and use. Mr. Boyle stated that there is an appropriation for a fire pumper truck for UGL Company No. 5. Councilman Jurkovic noted that this is the only tanker up there that services a remote area. Mr. Boyle advised that they are seeking \$9000 for imaging cameras and Spatial Data Logic software which would allow fire prevention to migrate to a system used throughout other departments in the municipality.

The police department is looking for property evidence software which is a high tech software system based on the use of barcodes which tracks custody of evidence. This would modernize the evidence taking process. Councilman Jurkovic stated that he would like to hear from the prosecutor and learn his opinion about this and he would like to know if there have been issues that would be alleviated by this purchase. Mr. Boyle advised that they are also seeking funding for body armor which must be replaced every 5 years on a rotation basis adding that we do get some grant money for this. The police department is also requesting two radar units at a cost of \$7,600 adding that these units pay for themselves over time. Some of our radar units are becoming aged and need upgrading. They are seeking funding for an SUV for a command unit for emergency response at a cost of \$20,000. This would be in addition to the number of vehicles being sought for regular line control vehicles. Acting Chief Chiosie explained the needs for scuba gear and timely response. He stated that his department is hoping to acquire two drawers for weapons to be housed in the back of vehicles as well as two ice suits.

Mr. Boyle stated that he has not received a request from the DPW Superintendent for vehicles as yet but they will likely need a bucket loader. He is also awaiting the capital requests from the two first aid squads. He commended staff for not asking for too much and specifically mentioned Acting Chief Chiosie who is working on his first budget. He advised that he is scheduling a training meeting for Councilmen Rosone & Signorino with the Auditor.

Councilman Jurkovic stated that he is not a fan of the efficiency of this budget process. And he questioned how other municipalities address this process. He spoke with the Administrator and the Township about forming subcommittees similar to the process used in dealing with the defeated school budget process last year. Other towns do subcommittees that report back to the full council and he suggested that if we establish two subcommittees with the budget divided equally between both committees the process will be more efficient. Subsequently the Council will have a public hearing with Administrator making recommendations. Under the current process the Council is asked to make decisions without being able to digest the information. This is not efficient. If we have subcommittees there will be more productive discussions that will lead to public hearings that are more orderly and better researched. Other towns take that approach. Scheduling would be easier. Council President Smolinski agreed adding that the subcommittees would meet with department heads and then report back to the full Council at public meetings. Councilman Weisbecker stated this would mean fewer meetings. Councilman Jurkovic suggested Saturday meetings to get this done effectively with Council President Smolinski agreeing that he would like to expedite this process. Council gave consensus to discuss subcommittees tonight.

Councilman Ramaglia stated that he would like to ensure that there is ample opportunity for the public to be heard. Councilman Weisbecker noted that the opportunity would arise because each committee would have to report back to full Council. Mayor Bieri stated that this process would not result in fewer meetings but rather fewer public meetings. The Council gave consensus to proceed to subcommittee.

Mayor Bieri asked if she is precluded from attending because this is being discussed about Council. Councilman Weisbecker stated that the ordinance stipulates that the budget is between the Administrator and Council. Mayor Bieri stated that she would like to be included. Councilman Jurkovic objected stating that the Mayor has the right to sit with any department but Council cannot. Mayor Bier stated that she wants the record to reflect that she wishes to participate. Councilman Jurkovic stated that the committees cannot take action; they can make recommendations. This process will give Council the opportunity to get a better handle on the budget. He stated that it may be prudent to have one each of the new council members on a committee. Council President Smolinski stated that he knows what departments he would like to review and he will contact Administrator Boyle in that regard.

Two committees were agreed upon as follows:

