
TOWNSHIP OF WEST MILFORD, COUNTY OF PASSAIC, NEW JERSEY

Minutes of: Township Council Special Meeting
Date of Meeting: January 29, 2015
Time of Meeting: 6:00 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 published in the Herald News on January 18, 2015; 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, Michael Hensley, Vivienne Erk, Michele Dale, Luciano Signorino, Marilyn Lichtenberg, Mayor Bettina Bieri.
Absent: None.
Also Present: Township Administrator Kenneth Gabbert, Township Clerk Antoinette Battaglia, Kirk Bakker, Public Works Inspector, Jill Knipp, Administrative Secretary, Timothy Ligus, Construction Official

Agenda No. II

Purpose

Review of the proposed 2015 Municipal Budget.

Agenda No. III

Review of 2015 Municipal Budget

Overview – Administrator Kenneth Gabbert said that the construction official, Tim Ligus wants to make a presentation which he may have to move because information has not been distributed. Tomorrow is fire dept and OEM and Saturday is cancelled.

2015 Public Works Department Budget Request – In the absence of a Director, Kirk Bakker & Jill Knipp addressed the Council. Mr. Gabbert commended them both for keeping the department running in the absence of a director. Administrator Gabbert directed Council to the information he had distributed. He noted that there is a significant increase to the budget for weed harvesting. Last year, the Township took over the weed harvesting for the Greenwood Lake Bi-State Commission. The Township did it once last year but the equipment is in dire need of repairs and the Township will be solely responsible for the entire harvesting process this year. Mr. Gabbert said there is a request of \$300 to purchase a new chair for the incoming director and he reviewed the clothing allowance which is dictated by contract. He also reviewed line items that remained flat from last year.

Councilwoman Dale asked if there are safeguards in place to track equipment. Mr. Bakker said they maintain sign in/sign out sheets for all equipment. All broken equipment is returned before it is replaced. Supplies are secured.

Mr. Bakker said he may seek an increase in appropriations later in the year for asphalt. Discussion ensued about various pieces of equipment. Ms. Knipp recalled that the Council opted to rent a street sweeper last year and Mr. Bakker advised that the Township has one back hoe and one excavator. He said that one street sweeper has come to the end of its life. Discussion ensued about the process for street sweeping, time frames & conditions of sweepers last year. Staff said it is likely there will be a need to rent a sweeper again this year. They said that without it, all streets cannot be swept by the end of June. A new machine would cost about \$80,000 and the contract to rent a sweeper last year was in an amount not to exceed \$20,000. Council asked for a breakdown of information for the street sweeping, machines in use, operator costs, rental costs, and time each machine was on the road. Mr. Bakker said his capital request includes a sweeper. The average life span of a sweeper is six years.

Mr. Bakker has requested an increase from \$125,000 to \$190,000 for striping which would cover the entire town and is now mandatory. He said the department stripes before Fall but it rarely lasts through all winter. If done too early it will definitely not last through winter. Discussion ensued about various options for striping. Mr. Gabbert said the tree removal request is to deal with trees that need to be cut

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down for road work. In the past the Township has tried to work with utility companies but it is never ending. These funds would fund hiring contractors on Township roads and the request is for \$10,000 to start a program.

Johner Building – Mr. Ligus addressed the Council saying he is asking for \$1,000 to maintain Johner. He reviewed the cleaning supplies used throughout all buildings. He advised Council that many pieces of machinery & equipment failed last year including boilers. He reviewed line items that remained the same as last year. He said that Bill Messmer has been a great asset but there are times that the trades, electricians & plumbers are necessary and he noted that it is expected that Mr. Messmer will be retiring this year. Discussion ensued about various repairs done in buildings last year and some possible needs this year. Mr. Ligus said he has requested a surge protector for all our electrical outlets because use of electrical appliances has increased. Mr. Gabbert said there are many items that need replacement & repair including carpets, wood panels, and doors.

Administrator Gabbert reviewed the various line items for snow removal. Discussion ensued about the brine process and Mr. Bakker said they are working on it but we do not have a truck yet. The tank has been purchased but it has not been installed on a truck. He explained the temperatures and storm conditions where brine can be used. The storms we have had up to this point, he said, would not meet the criteria. Council said they are anxious to see the brine program up and running. Mr. Gabbert discussed how much a snow storm costs when everyone is called in and he has been reviewing the thresholds for calling everyone in. Modifying that policy could possible result in significant savings because calling all contractors in can cost about \$10,000 per hour. The Thanksgiving storm alone cost \$136,000. He reviewed the modifications being instituted for calling out contractors. Mr. Bakker noted that smaller storms generally result in more complaints. Mr. Gabbert said he is hoping to budget less but manage it better. Discussion ensued about specific events during recent storms. Administrator Gabbert said he favors a 4-inch threshold to call contractors out and it has been a 3-inch threshold in the past. He reviewed the change from Accuweather to Weatherworks saying that Weatherworks costs significantly less and has been effective.

Police vehicle parts – Administrator Gabbert said he has provided information on all vehicles. It has come from various sources which causes difficulty tracking. We do not have software or staff to do the analysis being sought by Council. Councilwoman Dale asked if it would be beneficial to get temporary help to start tracking and then use that data as the basis for tracking in the future. Ms. Knipp said there is no software to track this. Councilwoman Dale said it is a shame that we do not know what our maintenance costs are for our vehicles adding that the Township should have lifetime maintenance costs for vehicles. Mr. Gabbert said currently there is not a written document but the process is being followed through staff diligence. Mayor Bieri said that the data is in a manual folder for each vehicle but it is not in a computer data base to allow it to be reviewed. Ms. Knipp said the only thing not documented is the mechanic's time on each repair. Councilwoman Dale said she would like to provide the assistance to have this data tracked and Councilman Hensley agreed. He recalled the Council promised Mr. Clementi that we would get him the software to track these costs. He said Council cannot choose the right vehicles without the right data. Mr. Ligus said that he agrees but $\frac{3}{4}$ of the fleet should be removed because of the condition of the vehicles. Councilwoman Dale agreed but said Council needs to be able to justify that and if the repair costs indicate that it is warranted that would be the justification. Discussion ensued about the software options to track these costs. Mayor Bieri said a few years ago she gave the senior mechanic the authority to choose DPW vehicles and be involved in drafting specifications. Mr. Gabbert said that despite Council's commitment last year, the funding for the software was not in the budget. It is a difficult process to start when the software is needed. The request is for \$17,000 for the software. It would take 6-9 months to get it up to speed. He will try to get the raw data. Nonetheless we have police vehicles with over 100,000 miles that should not be transitioned into the fleet. We should turn the vehicles over with lower mileage. Councilwoman Dale said the data can be tracked in Excel and perhaps the CFO can set up a data sheet adding that Council should not have to go through another budget cycle without this information. Councilman Hensley said he would support having a temporary person dedicated to that task. Discussion ensued about what it would cost to hire a part time person to compile and enter the data into Excel. Administrator Gabbert said he estimates it would cost about \$10,000 but when we review salaries & wages later in the year there may be tough decisions to be made. He said he is working with unions to have people work across departments.

Mr. Bakker asked for discussion of the fire trucks. Ms. Knipp said the Township provides \$15,000 of funding to each fire company. Mr. Bakker said he has concerns about the funding for parts, repairs, equipment & large vehicles. There is \$80,000 in the temporary budget and already \$44,000 has been spent and we are still in January. Ms. Knipp said the department asked for \$160,000 and it was reduced to \$145,000 and they fear that it will not be sufficient. Discussion ensued about funding approved for vehicles last year. Councilwoman Dale said when new vehicles are purchased repair line items should go down. Ms. Knipp said the preference is to purchase four new trucks but it takes almost a full year for new trucks to come in and in that year the repairs are still necessary.

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Administrator Gabbert said the recycling & solid waste budgets are driven by contracts. He said the Township's composting contract is on a month-to-month basis at this time.

The Council thanked Mr. Bakker & Ms. Knipp.

2015 Community Services & Recreation Budget Request – Director Tim Roetman and his assistant, Liz Pordon addressed the Council. Administrator Gabbert commended Ms. Pordon for keeping the department functioning since March of last year in the absence of a director.

Mr. Roetman said it has been a fast learning process and he feels there are many areas that he can effectuate improvements in the next few months including Bubbling Springs and the day camp. He is looking at all the programs now and is planning for spring & summer and evaluating programs with specific criteria in mind. It will take time but he will get it done. Over the last few days & weeks he and his staff have implemented a new marketing plan for more electronic media posts and email blasts. They are sending out weekly press releases and doing an overall better job communicating with the public. Councilwoman Erik encouraged him to use channel 77.

Mr. Roetman reviewed the PRIDE program saying that they did not expend the entire appropriation in 2014 because they have established good fundraising programs. They raised about \$15,000 last year thereby reducing the cost to the municipality. Council commended the staff for that. The money requested this year is to expand programs and provide more opportunities. He reviewed all other programs saying that these are programs where participants pay registration fees and the Township pays other costs. He reviewed offsetting revenue projections equating to \$123,900. Revenue, he said, is higher than actual costs due to administrative fees. Council commended the department for recovering costs. Mayor Bieri noted that while revenue covers some of the costs related to the programs it does not cover salary & wages. The \$15 administrative fee covers a small percentage of those costs. Administrator Gabbert said revenue in 2013 was \$200,000. It dropped in 2014 to between \$135,000 and \$140,000. The township is projecting \$124,000 in revenue for 2015. Mr. Roetman said the revenue reduction is due to the preschool closing. Mayor Bieri said our reduction in operating costs for preschool offset that and Mr. Roetman agreed saying costs exceeded revenue for day care when it was operational. Councilwoman Dale asked the CFO to update last year's analysis of CS&R for this year saying that should show the actual cost versus the revenue picture. Mr. Roetman said his goal is to generate a better-cost recovery share. He said it will take time to break even but there should be year-to-year improvements. He said he has started that even in this year's budget. As far as these programs, he said we can improve cost recovery by restructuring how we engage with instructors. He is proposing to change the agreements with instructors so that they be compensated at an hourly rate and they take that and the Township takes the balance based on enrollment. Council was very pleased to hear this. He said he will calculate the costs for each program individually, including supplies & materials and then calculate the compensation, enrollment and costs.

Bubbling Springs – Mr. Roetman said he is requesting \$70,000 to cover operating expenses of the lake & day camp. He fully reviewed this account. Many of the expenses for the lake are fixed and are unavoidable. He listed them noting that lake expenses are about \$36,000 and the day camp expenses are about \$32,000. Those expenses include food for barbeques, shirts for staff, field trips, and mulch. Some expenses are fixed but he identified some expenses where he may be able to effectuate savings. He will focus on getting enrollment up again. The program is already advertised for this year. He would like to restructure it for next year. He explained his reasoning based on two-week programs. There is repetitiveness with two-week programs. He would rather see more choices in the future. Councilwoman Dale said she would like to see the department institute those changes this year. Re-advertise and get these changes implemented. Mr. Roetman said he would like to retain the ability to register for one week at a time but he would structure the fee schedule accordingly. The fee structure for the entire program (8 weeks) would be different. He reviewed his proposals for the camp saying he would charge additional fees for field trips. He wants to set competitive prices with other camps in the area and he would like to generate revenue based on volume. Council approved. Councilwoman Dale said not everything will be successful but she commends Mr. Roetman for his efforts to manage the programs. Mr. Roetman gave some historical data about his experience with summer camps saying it takes a couple or three years to see the improvement. He said that the printing appropriations should be viewed as marketing and he has some ideas for advertising and cost effective avenues to get the word out. Mr. Gabbert said the credit card costs add up to an expense for the Township noting that it is provided as an option for online registrations. He said he will be reviewing it and making recommendations. Mayor Bieri said there should be consideration for charging a processing fee and Mr. Roetman said he will look into that with the provider. Discussion ensued about how best to determine the fees and it was recommended that it be a flat fee.

The Council reviewed appropriations for Hillcrest in various accounts. They also reviewed parks accounts. Mr. Roetman said he will look to restore Easter & Halloween celebrations. Councilwoman

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Dale said she would like to see fireworks back in the Township and Councilman Signorino agreed and said he would like to see it at Browns Point. Everyone agreed that parking is an issue at that location. Mr. Roetman said he will approach BOE about fireworks over the turf field and Council agreed giving consensus to have Mr. Roetman research the feasibility of restoring fireworks with the preference being a BOE facility. Mr. Roetman said he has a meeting tomorrow to introduce himself to Barbara Francesca, the school's business administrator, and he will broach it there and report back if help is needed. He said he proposes a glow in the dark egg hunt for Easter this year and Council agreed.

Ms. Pordon addressed Council about the mass transit grant. She said the grant will no longer be available to West Milford. We are now considered urban not rural under federal guidelines based on population clusters. She described the program and advised that she has discussed other possible grant opportunities with representatives from New Jersey Transit. The good news is it could expand the program and there would be less reporting. It will also allow us to apply for a new bus but the grant requires a 50% cash match. Her concern is the new grant will run in a calendar year cycle and the current grant runs through June which means there will be no grant money from July until December. She is hoping to garner more information and NJ Transit will try to work with her on solutions. Because we have to fund 50% Council may need to review fees. Ms. Pordon said we currently have two vehicles. One is operable and one is being repaired in Indiana.

Councilwoman Dale said we are not getting revenue from the teen coffee house. She said she spoke with the Director & Administrator about programs at the coffee house in the Fall and recommended researching the possibility of having after school programs. Tim said that is on his list to speak with the BOE administrator tomorrow. It was discussed at CASA where they talked about the school busing kids there from school which would help with the program. Councilwoman Dale said they bus to PAL and other day care centers and it is positive for the BOE to work with the town.

Agenda No. IV

Public Comments

Mayor Bieri opened the meeting to the public after advising that there is a five-minute limit for each speaker.

There being no comments from the public, Councilwoman Erik moved to close the public portion of the meeting.

Moved: Erik Seconded: Erk
Voted Aye: Unanimous voice vote.
Voted Nay: None.
Motion carried.

Agenda No. V

Adjournment

There being no further business to come before the Council, the Township Council adjourned the meeting at 8:28 p.m.

Moved: Erik Seconded: Erk
Voted Aye: Unanimous voice vote.
Voted Nay: None.
Motion carried.

Approved: April 22, 2015

MAYOR BETTINA BIERI
PRESIDING OFFICER

ANTOINETTE BATTAGLIA
TOWNSHIP CLERK