
TOWNSHIP OF WEST MILFORD, COUNTY OF PASSAIC, NEW JERSEY

Minutes of: Governing Body Special Meeting
Date of Meeting: April 8, 2019
Time of Meeting: 6:30 pm
Minute Page No: Page 1 of 3

The Special Meeting of the Governing Body was called to order by Mayor Michele Dale.

Adequate Notice Statement

Mayor Dale 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 advertised in the Herald News in its issue of April 4, 2019; copies were provided to the Suburban Trends, the Record and Star Ledger 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, front and rear of this room - for use in case of an emergency. Thank you.

Agenda No. I

Pledge of Allegiance

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

Agenda No. II

Roll Call

Present: Councilmembers Ada Erik, Andrena Pegel, Marilyn Lichtenberg, Peter McGuinness (arrived 6:37), Luciano Signorino, Patricia Gerst, Mayor Michele Dale

Absent: None

Also Present: None

Agenda No. III

Purpose

2019 Municipal Budget

Agenda No. IV

Review of 2019 Municipal Budget

Mr. Casey suggested that they begin with the summary of the major changes in the budget. Mayor Dale noted that Councilman McGuinness and Councilman Signorino requested a redlined version of the budget showing where the increases were. She mentioned that the Governing Body was provided this information at one of the first meetings that they had a budget discussion. She provided copies for the Council. She also provided the Matrix Cost Summary Analysis which outlines all of the additional and/or expenses that were a result of that study that the Township should consider.

Mr. Casey noted they have to fully fund the snow trust. Councilman McGuinness expressed that they had no committee meetings. Councilman Signorino suggested cutting the number in half. Mr. Casey said they can't because they already spent the money. Mr. Casey said unless they want to formally change the snow trust policy. He said right now there is \$511,000 in the account. Mayor Dale noted that the Council was provided this information. Mayor Dale explained that they have to fully fund the account in order to keep the \$500,000 in the account based on previous year's operations because they took the money to offset a tax increase last year. She noted that this year, in the operating budget, they have to fully fund the snow expense. Councilman McGuinness said he understands and he is trying to find another solution. He said he is not convinced that they have to fully fund the account.

Councilwoman Gerst asked why there was a \$10,000 increase for fees for services. Mrs. Mageean said they changed the way they did vital statistics. Mr. Ed Rodda was here and there were shared services with another town. Last year they only budgeted for a piece of the year and not the whole year. The \$20,000 is for the full year. Councilman McGuinness asked if it is fair to budget \$10,000 for half way through the year. Ms. Mageean said there is already someone doing it; it's not a new position; she started in the middle of last year.

Councilman Signorino noted that there is an increase in parks salary and wages and he asked if the retirement had an impact. Mrs. Mageean said the retirement did not have any impact because the person who filled the position was at the same salary. Councilwoman Gerst asked why the administrative printing increased to \$5,000 a year. Mrs. Mageean said they got a new printer and that is the lease payment on the printer. Councilman Signorino asked what was spent last year and the prior year. Mrs. Mageean said last year they spent \$1,902; the year before that \$1,509. Councilman Signorino said he would like to see some return on the investments that they make on the facilities. Mr. Casey said that line varies with how the Director is with promoting the programs. Councilman Signorino said he would like to provide the tools for the marketing to get more people to participate in the programs.

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Councilman Signorino asked the amount budgeted for the electricity in Town Hall. He said it is a big number. Councilman Signorino said they should be getting more efficient and not less. Mr. Casey said the main problem in Town Hall is the HVAC system, which is not efficient at all. Mr. Casey said they budget according to not knowing what will happen with the weather and the BPU (Board of Public Utilities) rates. Councilman McGuinness asked why the electricity went from \$0 to \$2,000 at the salt shed. Mrs. Mageean said the Township agreed that they would pay the electricity on the salt shed. Mr. Casey said the County built the shed and the Township agreed to a portion of the cost.

Councilman Signorino said there are several trucks by the Pump Track and he asked Mayor Dale if she knew why they are parked there. They consume most of the parking lot by Farrell Field. Mayor Dale asked Councilman Signorino to send her an email. Councilman McGuinness asked for an explanation on line 16 for telephones. Mr. Casey said it is one billing account for all the phones. Councilwoman Pegel and Councilman Signorino said they should revisit this. Mayor Dale said she is going to start adding up all the costs for staff hours to look into this and the amount of savings because there is quite the significant undertaking that comes with these requests. Councilman McGuinness asked if the telephone provider gives the Township a discount. Mrs. Mageean explained that they receive a paper check. Mr. Casey said there is a \$126,000 franchise fee and that is revenue. He said the franchise fee is set by the State and the Township does not have control over it.

Councilwoman Gerst asked to discuss statutory expenditures. Mr. Casey said they can remove the \$20,000 increase in social security because that was related to new employees. They have not funded any new employees. The other numbers are what PERS billed; retirement pension. The last line is because the police budget is at the 2018 rates because they are in negotiations. That is the salary adjustment. All the other numbers are set in stone. Councilwoman Gerst asked what retirement contingent is. Mr. Casey said it is contractual obligations; when certain police officers retire; they are reimbursed for unused paid time. Mrs. Mageean noted that the police have a larger number, so it is listed separately. Councilman McGuinness asked the difference in the prosecutor lines. Mr. Casey said one amount is for contingency if the prosecutor requires specialty expertise like an interpreter. Mrs. Mageean said they spent \$100 in 2018. Mr. Casey said the prosecutor can't charge anything over to the court because there has to be a barrier.

Mr. Casey said they need to discuss annual fire equipment. They need to reimburse the fire companies. They need \$35,000 to reimburse the money they spent on the air packs. He wants to put it in the bond ordinance because it is a reimbursement of a grant. Councilman McGuinness noted that all the fire companies got the air packs except company 2 and company 6 but company 2 is being covered by the extras. Mayor Dale noted that, on the summary sheets, there is fixed costs.

Mr. Casey noted they retired \$3 million dollars of debt this year so, to hold even, they can issue \$3 million because they retired \$3 million. Mayor Dale noted that the municipal debt has climbed significantly over the past ten years. Councilman Signorino asked the current Township debt once the \$3 million in debt is retired. He wants to compare it to the Township debt in 2010. Mr. Casey said for the last several years they have been issuing about \$3 million and retiring \$3 million. Councilman McGuinness said he thought the Township did a good job collecting taxes. Mr. Casey said the total tax requirements increase every year. Mrs. Mageean said they pay the county and the school regardless of whether or not they get paid. Mr. Casey noted there is \$100,000 in tax appeals. Councilman Signorino asked where they were with the surplus. Councilman McGuinness said the highest it's ever been at.

Mayor Dale asked if the Council wanted to take a break and then discuss the capital budget. She asked the Council if they would like to open the meeting to the public before the break. The Council gave consensus.

Agenda No. V

Public Comments

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

Jim Foody, 2 Kushagua Trail N, Hewitt – Said Mr. Casey knows what he is doing and he is glad to see the Council going through the budget. He urged the Council not to forget about the \$500,000 that the Board of Education is sitting on that is from the Township paying rent for Hillcrest. He said the Township should be getting the money back. He explained that the Board of Education is letting the building go; weeds are growing through the windows, the roof is leaking and they turned the heat off. He appreciates the Council working towards a zero percent increase. He said the Ridgewood Council voted to put the school budget back to April and he asked the Council to do the same. He expressed that people are fed up with the tax increases and he hopes that the Council does the same as the Ridgewood Council with the school budget.

Tom Napiorski, 45 Alpine Court, Hewitt – Asked if the budget will be voted on tonight and if the road costs will be in the budget. He asked what the Council expects the residents to do with no or little maintenance on the roads if the vote it down.

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He mentioned that the Council started this fight and there are a lot of things that they don't do on the dirt roads. He noted that the residents would be paying 78% of the estimated costs.

There being no one else wishing to be heard, Councilwoman Erik moved to close the public portion of the meeting.

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

Mayor Dale – Said Mr. Foody's suggestion has been on the Administration's radar for quite some time. It was a five year agreement with the Board of Education. She noted that she and Councilman Signorino sat together on the renegotiation of the agreement. She mentioned that it is about half a million dollars in funding and it will be available late next year. Mayor Dale explained that the the visual intent of the money was to maintain that building. The Township used it for many years and the general consensus was the Township did not maintain the building; therefore, there is an expense associated with maintaining the building and/or improving the building back to standard to which they can use it.

Councilman Signorino suggested having a special meeting before something happens to the money. He said it is a concern that they might use the money before the next meeting. He would like to get Mr. Semrau's advice. Mayor Dale said they are seeking the attorney's advice. Councilwoman Pegel thinks they should discuss this at the next meeting and see if they can add it to the agenda. Councilman McGuinness said they should demand the money.

Mayor Dale asked the Council if they would please consider giving Mr. Napiorski an answer or decision by the next meeting. Councilwoman Lichtenberg mentioned that she is in favor of the \$350,000 for the roads in his area.

The Governing Body went into recess at 9:26 p.m.
The Governing Body returned to the public meeting at 9:43 p.m. with all present as before.

Mr. Casey noted that they bonded for \$675,000 and that ordinance will be introduced at the next meeting. They funded the matching grants for Awosting Road, Canistear Road and the Bubbling Springs baseball field. Mr. Casey reviewed the requests for the capital budget. Mrs. Mageean recapped the changes that the Governing Body made. Councilwoman Erik thinks they should make a final decision on the capital budget tonight. Councilman Signorino said he would like to hold off. The Council agreed that they would like to schedule another budget meeting to review the revisions they made to the budget. The Governing Body agreed to have the next budget meeting on April 29, 2019. Mayor Dale said she will confirm the Council's availability.

Agenda No. VI

Adjournment

There being no further business to come before the Council, the Governing Body adjourned the meeting at 10:23 p.m.

Moved: McGuinness Seconded: Signorino
Voted Aye: Unanimous voice vote
Voted Nay: None
Motion carried.

Approved: April 24, 2019

Respectfully submitted:

Sherry Zbrzeski, Keyboarding Clerk I

MICHELE DALE, MAYOR

ANTOINETTE BATTAGLIA, TOWNSHIP CLERK