
TOWNSHIP OF WEST MILFORD, COUNTY OF PASSAIC, NEW JERSEY

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Governing Body Special Meeting
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The Special Meeting of the Governing Body was called to order by Mayor Bettina Bieri.

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 advertised in the Herald News in its issue of September 17, 2017; 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 Bieri led all in attendance in a salute to the flag.

Agenda No. II

Roll Call

Present: Councilmembers Ada Erik, Tim Wagner, Luciano Signorino, Marilyn Lichtenberg,
Mayor Bettina Bieri
Absent: Mike Hensley, Pete McGuinness
Also Present: Township Administrator/Clerk Antoinette Battaglia

Agenda No. III

Purpose

Review of the Municipal Budget

Agenda No. IV

Review of the 2017 Municipal Budget

Assessed Value – Ms. Mageean discussed an email from Mr. Townsend and spoke about how the assessed value is potentially going to change from 2017 to 2018. She explained that the tax appeals reduced the assessed value and the tax level. There is a potential amount of an additional \$2.8 million in the state tax court and Veterans could become 100% tax exempt. She said that Mr. Townsend believes they will add \$3.5 million in added assessments for additions and new construction. Councilman Wagner asked how this compares to last year. Ms. Mageean explained that last year there was a total decrease of \$13 million and had added assessments of \$5 million. Administrator Battaglia explained that all of the municipalities are seeing some level of increased ratable because of the economy. Ms. Mageean noted that it's a very minimal impact on the tax rate but the Governing Body should continue to monitor it.

Library – Ms. Mageean explained that she met with the Library Director, Mr. Pino. He supplied her with all of his documentation on all the money that was spent out of the capital Ordinance for the new library. It was compared to the information that they had and they came to an agreement with the numbers. There were some additional items that they took out of the Ordinance that the library does not have. She confirmed that \$30,617.41 has not been spent. Councilman Signorino asked for an explanation of section 20, reimbursed to library costs. Ms. Mageean explained that there were costs that were incurred from April 2014 to December 2015. The Township's portion of that amount was \$66,000. Ms. Mageean said that Mr. Pino's backup clarifies everything that was spent.

Councilman Wagner asked the amount that's in the library trust account and if remaining money could be repurposed. Ms. Mageean explained that there are still expenses; water testing and abandoning the old well that need to be taken from that account. Ms. Mageean said anything left to be paid is not going to be a material amount, the library owns 72.5% of that bond and the library has to get credit for 72.5%. Councilman Signorino said that he would like to see the balance go towards the old library. He suggested that the Council find a way to use the money to clean out the old library and fix it up. Ms. Mageean explained that the total credit amount of \$244,819 would have to go back to the library because they have to add to the \$177,000 for the Township's costs. The debt will stay with the Township because they can't pay down the bond. The library is paying off that piece of the bond so they have to receive a credit for it. She explained that she could redo the amortization table and change their payments for the entire bond, and that decision needs to be made between the Governing Body and the Library Board. Councilman Wagner asked the amount of money that could possibly be repurposed and Ms. Mageean said \$245,308. Mayor Bieri said if there is consensus from the Council the direction of the Governing Body would be to work with the Library Board. The Council gave consensus.

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Surplus – Ms. Mageean referred to the surplus spreadsheet that had a trend from 2009 to 2017. There are two contracts that haven't been settled, they currently have \$239,000 reserved for that and she believes they will need another \$247,000. In addition, the snow trust account needs to have money added to it because they have spent a significant amount of that money. Councilman Wagner asked the amount to date that's in the snow trust account. The money only gets removed from the snow trust if they go over budget. Ms. Mageean explained that they anticipate a significant amount of money to be removed from that account for expenditures. Councilman Signorino asked what expenditures are coming out. Councilman Wagner noted the old grit stock pile and potential protection for the equipment with a cost of approximately \$250,000. Ms. Mageean said the brine truck is the only expense that was removed from the snow trust account and the total amount to date is \$321,185. She said a balance of \$435,000 remaining from 2016 will be moved into the snow trust account. She believes that \$500,000 is a sufficient amount to leave in that account.

Administrator Battaglia noted that some of these expenditures are one shot revenue expenses. The biggest expense is the removal of the grit pile and they are currently getting estimates. Ms. Mageean said they are not going to spend any more snow related money from 2016. They might have 2016 expenses that they are still paying. Administrator Battaglia explained that in the past there have been outstanding amounts and they try to follow up with vendors. The contracts all have a provision where the Township gets invoiced within 30 days. She said there have been discrepancies in the past that have to be reviewed so amounts could change. Councilman Signorino asked if a bill takes so long to get submitted could they create a resolution with a certain bill date. Administrator Battaglia explained they did send the bills but the amounts did not seem right, so they spent the time to review each account and bill. Ms. Mageean mentioned that these are not the final surplus numbers.

Turf Field – Ms. Mageean explained that the Township entered into an agreement with the Board of Education to replace the turf field at the High School. A turf field could cost \$400,000 - \$600,000 which would last 20-30 years. Councilman Wagner suggested looking into who is maintaining the turf field. Councilman Signorino asked if the due diligence was done regarding possible chemicals on a turf field. Administrator Battaglia explained that the research is in the hands of the Board of Education and she will follow up on the maintenance schedule for the turf field. Ms. Mageean noted that if the Governing Body had to fund the field they could add the money each year into the operating portion of the capital budget. She asked the Governing Body if they wanted an appropriation for the 2018 budget to replace the turf field. Councilman Signorino suggested getting the estimate first from a competitor and the company that installed the original field. Councilman Wagner asked if there was money that could be repurposed to pay for the field. Ms. Mageean explained that the turf field was donated and she reached out to the Board of Education to see if they had the cost. She will get the information and follow up with the Governing Body.

Credit Card Use – Ms. Mageean said there are three departments that use credit cards to collect money (Tax Collector, Court and Recreation). There is a convenience fee of 2.5% only for tax payments. They changed vendors for the Tax Department hoping the fees decrease. Administrator Battaglia explained they are looking for direction from the Governing Body to expand the credit use to other departments to reduce the fees and the cost to the Township. There have been requests from the Clerk's Office and Building Department. Councilman Wagner feels that the merchant should absorb the fee and he asked when an outside company has done a cost analysis. Mayor Bieri explained that this is a convenience for the residents and she asked if they could make the charge a minimum amount to cover the cost of the fee. The Governing Body gave consensus to research competitive pricing, credit card use in other departments and charging customers the convenience fee. Ms. Mageean said that she would research all the requests from the Governing Body.

Police Vehicles – Mr. Keith Hansen provided a hand out of the mileage and idling times for the police vehicles and explained the mileage/hourly calculation. He clarified why there is more wear and tear on the police vehicles. Administrator Battaglia explained that Mr. Hansen got this information from Ford and she referred to Chief Storbeck regarding the true vehicle usage. Councilman Wagner requested a cost analysis and asked if they needed all 25 vehicles. Chief Storbeck explained that the patrol cars/front line cars have a two-year life expectancy and they need to be replaced every two years. They repurpose them within the department to a second line car. Chief Storbeck noted that some cars have different purposes and officers are not always patrolling. The cars are used for various things. Administrator Battaglia explained that each lieutenant has to have a car at his or her disposal. Chief Storbeck said they haven't added to the fleet they reduced it. Sgt. Richnavsky explained that once a vehicle reaches 100,000 miles it can't be used for patrol.

Mayor Bieri noted they have been consistent with the vehicle usage. She asked if a vehicle could be replaced if it's in an accident. Councilman Wagner asked how often the technology in the vehicle changes. Chief Storbeck said the technology changes every five years and they try to keep the cars until they reach 100,000 miles. If a vehicle has an accident they would not get a full percentage insurance payment because they only keep the cars for two years. Administrator Battaglia explained why the value decreases differently on these vehicles and why the insurance companies will not payout the full value for vehicles that have been in an accident. Chief Storbeck said they need one new car in addition to the normal four replacements.

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The average cost per car is \$32,000 and unless the cars are totaled in an accident the car gets repurposed. They are down one vehicle due to a crash and they were paid \$12,500 from the insurance company. Administrator Battaglia explained the challenge because they have to use the funds in the subsequent year.

Councilman Wagner asked what the car is worth after two years in an auction. Mr. Hansen explained the cars lose more than half their value after two years and the vehicles could be repurposed after their life expectancy. The maintenance is minimal after that because the cars are not used 24/7. The miles and hours need to be reported so the cars can be serviced monthly. Mayor Bieri confirmed that cars go to auction before too much money is spent on them. When it's no longer cost effective they try to make some money off the cars.

Mayor Bieri asked Chief Storbeck if he had any concerns that would impact the budget. Chief Storbeck said there were two cars involved in accidents so they will be short a vehicle and he wants to replace the NDT terminals (laptop computer) in the vehicles. The technology changes every 5-7 years and they are currently out of warranty. He confirmed that they need eight new ones and the cost is \$1,600 for each terminal. Chief Storbeck explained that the warranty is seven years and they purchase an extended warranty. Councilman Wagner asked if there was a cost efficiency audit done on each department and if it's something that could be done. Administrator Battaglia said that has never been done and there are companies that specialize in that service. She said she could get a cost estimate and follow up with the Governing Body. Councilman Wagner requested that the company has a municipal background.

Overtime – Councilman Signorino asked for an explanation of police communications overtime. Chief Storbeck explained that someone has to be at the dispatch desk while officers are scheduled off or on vacation. There are two ways that they fill the position; part time dispatchers, and a list they call off of. If they are not available and they can't fill the position they have to use the full time staff to fill the overtime position. Councilman Signorino asked what changed because the overtime amount has doubled. Chief Storbeck said they had part time employees that became full time, and there is an administrative staff working during the week to assist. If they can't get a part time dispatcher there are officers that can fill the overtime position.

Councilman Wagner asked if the special officers could dispatch and Chief Storbeck said only if they have their certification. The Governing Body asked the Chief to research the certifications cost. Chief said they could always use more special officers and they are looking to hire two more. Mayor Bieri asked Chief Storbeck to address the needs of the dispatch and figure out how to reduce the overall costs. Councilman Wagner asked if the REAL program could reduce the costs. Chief Storbeck explained that hiring motivated officers for the program is difficult and they have to work around the school schedule. Councilman Wagner asked if there is way to reduce the cost of the REAL program and if there are volunteers that they could use for the program. Chief Storbeck explained that there is a level of volunteerism already involved. Mayor Bieri said the goal is to reduce the overall cost without impacting the service and the safety of the officers and residents. Chief Storbeck said he will research all the requests from the Governing Body. Councilman Signorino asked when a special officer works dispatch does the special officer get a different rate and Administrator Battaglia said the rate is different by the contract.

DPW – Councilman Signorino asked if there will be any major changes that will affect the budget. Mr. Steines said there was savings in the repair line item and this year has been progressing very well. There are a couple of pieces of equipment that need to be replaced and the newer equipment and the undercoating of the vehicles made a difference in the savings. Councilman Wagner asked the price to undercoat a vehicle and Mr. Steines said approximately \$600.00 and he recommends doing it every 5-7 years. He put a program into place; the vehicles go to a local vendor to get washed to maintain the undercarriage and the monthly cost is \$ 80.00. Councilman Signorino asked Mr. Steines to research getting the larger trucks washed. Mr. Steines noted that he put a policy in place last year that all vehicles get washed within 24 hours after a storm.

Administrator Battaglia asked Mr. Steines for the quotes to remove the grit pile. Mr. Steines said the estimates are \$95,000 to \$157,000 and the pile has to be tested and screened. He reached out to a vendor from the co-op; the price is about \$207,000, the process is from start to finish without screening and testing, they truck everything away and then supply the certification. Administrator Battaglia said by removing the grit pile it will benefit the stormwater management plan. Mr. Steines confirmed that there is approximately 4,500 tons of grits. They are phasing out the grits almost completely except for dirt roads. If they screen it, there is the overage that comes out of it and that will be additional grit that they have to remove. Councilman Signorino requested estimates for all the related costs. Mr. Steines confirmed that the grit can't be used or repurposed for anything unless it's tested. Councilman Wagner asked if the DPW trucks it to the facility would it be the same price and Mr. Steines said yes. Councilman Signorino asked if they could use seasonal workers to transport the grit pile. Administrator Battaglia explained that they can't use seasonal workers because seasonal workers can't operate the trucks and heavy equipment under the contract.

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Mr. Steines recommended investing in their own brine mixing system because it's cost effective and there is an ideal spot for it. They will need a base foundation to mix the brine and the cost of the startup system is approximately \$18,000. Mr. Steines said they only have two trucks to use for the brine and they will need an additional truck. Administrator Battaglia explained that these are the expenses they foresee and they could use the trust fund for the brine project. Councilman Wagner noted that it's a lot of money but they are protecting their investment. He is concerned about removing the stockpile and protecting the equipment. The target is the repairs are down so the extra money next year could be surplus. Mayor Bieri agreed that protecting the equipment and phasing out the grits is important. Mr. Steines said it would be beneficial if they could purchase another used brine truck.

Councilman Wagner asked the status of the snowplowing bid and asked if they could reach out to the bidders to see if they could expand the mileage. Administrator Battaglia explained the re-bid process and the mileage radius and said they did invite them to re-bid if they have additional vehicles. She provided the bidders list to the Governing Body and will have the notice to bidders for the snowplowing sent to Landmark on Airport Road.

Mr. Steines expressed that the DPW needs manpower. He explained that the department has not had a full mechanical staff all year. He asked that the Governing Body consider increasing the staff in 2018. The department needs an additional five people out on the road and it's not an easy process to hire seasonal employees. Administrator Battaglia explained that there are restraints with seasonal workers that could violate the bargaining agreement. They have identified seasonal workers that they would like to hire permanently. Councilman Signorino suggested that they expand the job search and advertising for hiring seasonal workers. He asked if there were any anticipated retirements and Mr. Steines said they anticipate only one employee retiring. Administrator Battaglia noted that there is one person out on workers compensation. She explained that the storm drains require a big area of expertise so the experienced employees had to work overtime because the seasonal workers can't perform those duties. Councilwoman Erik asked Mr. Steines if he was satisfied with the three seasonal workers to hire them full time and Mr. Steines said yes. Councilman Wagner asked for the pay scale so they can revisit this and asked if there were shared services with other towns. Administrator Battaglia said they will be making a budget request for additional staffing in the DPW.

Community Services and Recreation – Mr. Roetman said he projects a similar budget in 2018. Councilman Wagner asked about the Hillcrest expenses. Mr. Roetman explained that a large portion of the Hillcrest bills were utilities and they are not in the recreation budget. There is a salary and wage line item for the Hillcrest monitors, and the monitors have been transferred to the library. There is one monitor per night and they have three people that rotate the job position. Councilman Wagner asked the monitors duties. Mr. Roetman said they open and close partitions, set up meeting rooms, open and close the facility and public interaction. Councilman Signorino asked the salary of the monitors and if they could assign additional tasks. He suggested hanging signs that say please notify a monitor if there is a spill, and also asking the monitors to make sure the building is always presentable. Mr. Roetman noted the monitor's pay is \$10 per hour and they make sure there is no garbage lying around. He explained that the monitors walk around and check the facility before and after every meeting to look for garbage. Mr. Roetman noted the groups that use the library are the same groups that have been using the facilities for years, most of them know the rules and they keep the facility clean.

Mayor Bieri noted that the maintenance employee was moved from Hillcrest to the library. She asked if there were any other buildings that the maintenance employee is responsible for and if they need a full time maintenance employee. Mr. Roetman noted that the maintenance employee is responsible for the Recreation Center, Teen Center and Bubbling Springs. Administrator Battaglia explained that they maintenance employee has a lot of projects at the Recreation Center and there are a few more projected projects. She noted that the facilities need work such as painting, new carpet and blinds. Mr. Roetman noted during the winter months that the gyms need to be mopped several times a week and it takes a considerable amount of time and effort. Councilman Wagner asked if they researched outside cleaning services. Administrator Battaglia explained that the maintenance employee that does the work is also responsible for cleaning. Mayor Bieri asked if the Township is better off with contracted cleaning services because it might be cost effective. Administrator Battaglia explained the challenges with that related to the maintenance employee being in the facility full time and being familiar with the building. There are certain projects that the maintenance employee takes care of that are very unique to the building.

Councilman Signorino suggested expanding the services to the Veterans. Mr. Roetman explained that the Veteran Service Officer visits twice a month to assist and explain the services that are available. The programs are run at the federal level, and he suggested networking with the American Legion in the Township. Mayor Bieri suggested having a flyer on hand in all departments with the contact numbers available for the Veterans when the officer is not there. Administrator Battaglia spoke about a program where Veterans groups were getting access to group counseling sessions at the VFW. She suggested reaching out to those groups to identify what programs are needed in West Milford. Councilman Signorino mentioned that he knows an artist that would like to fix the Veterans monument in front of Town Hall. Administrator Battaglia said she would refer to the Veterans Council and ask their opinion. Councilwoman Erik said the Veterans are going to start fundraising and looking for a grant to fix the monument.

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Mayor Bieri asked Mr. Roetman if he plans to stay within the budget for the remainder of the year. Administrator Battaglia noted that she asked Mr. Roetman to address the Governing Body to speak about revenue. Mr. Roetman said they will stay well within the budget. Councilman Signorino asked Mr. Roetman to identify the changes that occurred from leaving Hillcrest and transitioning into the new PAL building. Mr. Roetman noted in the budget worksheet there is a line item for repairs to Hillcrest and money for the recreation center that will no longer be there. Councilman Signorino mentioned that there were plans to build a field at the recreation center and he was told that it could not be done. He would like to investigate what it would take to build a field. Mr. Roetman explained that PAL tried to build a field and they were stopped due to DEP restrictions. Also, there is a well line that runs along the space where the field was supposed to be built. Administrator Battaglia said that she would check on the field plans with Mr. Paul Ferriero and follow up with the Governing Body.

Mr. Roetman said the elevator bids for the Westbrook Teen Center came back in June significantly higher. He asked if the elevator would be a worthy expenditure of Township funds in a building with minimal use compared to other facilities in town. The consensus of the Recreation Committee was it would be more beneficial to re-appropriate funds for other projects. Mayor Bieri suggested not spending the money until they have better plans for that building. Councilman Wagner noted that it's not a requirement right now based on the amount of utilization of the building and recommended repurposing that money to repair the fields. Administrator Battaglia noted that the grant was a CDBG grant, and at the facilities committee meeting, they discussed requests to submit to the County to get another grant. She explained that CDBG grant funding has limitations and restraints and there are very few areas in the Township that fit into their restrictions and limits.

Councilman Signorino asked the status of the revenue from the recreation programs. Administrator Battaglia noted that Mr. Roetman and Ms. Mageean are preparing an analysis on all the programs. Mr. Roetman noted that revenue has increased this year for Bubbling Springs. Mayor Bieri requested an analysis on Hillcrest verses the Recreation Center. She asked Mr. Roetman if there are any concerns for the 2018 budget and Mr. Roetman said a majority of the line items will look identical. Councilwoman Erik asked about getting prices to repair the bleachers and Mr. Roetman said he has requests out to vendors for quotes. Councilman Wagner asked for an update on the senior citizen bus transportation. Mr. Roetman said the transition went very well and everything is progressing. Mayor Bieri asked about the senior nutrition program. Mr. Roetman explained that once they left Hillcrest the county moved the program to Camp Hope and its back in operations; Monday-Friday, September through June, and paratransit will transport the seniors back and forth. Councilman Wagner asked if there were any ideas for new programs and if there were any programs they were going to remove. Mr. Roetman said they are always researching new programs, the existing programs are well attended and they reduced the oil painting classes. Councilman Signorino requested a copy of the bus schedule. Mr. Roetman said that he would send the schedule via email to Administrator Battaglia and Mr. Nicholson at WM77TV.

Councilman Wagner asked the status of the pavilion that is roped off at the Recreation Center. Mr. Roetman explained that they are thinking about closing it and using the space as storage. He will resubmit it as another capital item. Councilwoman Erik requested that Mr. Roetman research quotes on metal buildings from A.B. Martin. Councilman Wagner asked for an update on Nosenzo Pond and Councilman Signorino requested a copy of the plans. Mr. Roetman said the construction and initial phase started on Nosenzo Pond, and the engineer recommended phase one to be completed within 45 days. Administrator Battaglia explained that they still have to identify additional funds for the next phase.

Chief Storbeck followed up with the Governing Body on questions that were asked earlier in the meeting. He explained why the overtime for the dispatchers increased and how challenging it's been to find a part time dispatcher for the day time hours. The department is very busy and they can't hire a dispatcher that is not experienced. Qualified individuals get trained for 40 hours to get familiar with the layout of the Township, computers and communication system; there are four separate systems that a dispatcher has to learn. He noted that the five day basic training class cost is \$300-\$380, and the salary for a part time dispatcher is \$24.38 per hour. Administrator Battaglia asked if dispatch gives directions, and Chief Storbeck explained that there is a street directory but the dispatcher really needs to understand the layout of the town. Administrator Battaglia noted that the dispatch phone complaints have decreased and she commended Chief Storbeck and his staff.

Health – Mr. Hodges provided an update on the 2017 budget. He said he will have the bid specifications for the remediation at Town Hall. He spoke about how the public health immunizations budget will decrease in 2018 because the Health Department is going to limit the flu vaccines to the people that are underinsured or noninsured. Administrator Battaglia asked Mr. Hodges to provide an update on the asbestos issue in Town Hall. Mr. Hodges said that there were concerns raised about the asbestos and it's a known issue. He reviewed pictures and some of the areas and spoke to a few companies to get quotes to do an analysis. The preliminary amount is \$1,650 for the study and sampling. Mr. Hodges said he reached out to the local pharmacies in the area to try and develop a referral system for the flu vaccine. Mayor Bieri asked Mr. Hodges if there were any concerns that would impact the budget. Mr. Hodges explained that the line item for environmental health bacterial work which is the lab reports on water went over budget so he has to estimate higher for 2018.

