

TOWNSHIP OF WASHINGTON, WARREN COUNTY

Budget Meeting
April 1, 2010

The budget meeting of the Washington Township Committee was held this date in the Washington Township Municipal Building located at 211 Route 31 North, Washington, N.J. The meeting was called to order at 7:00 p.m. by Mayor Samir Elbassiouny.

SUNSHINE LAW COMPLIANCE - The Mayor noted that this meeting was being held in compliance with the Open Public Meeting Law of 1975 in as much as a notice had been published in the Star Gazette, transmitted to the Express Times, posted at the Municipal Building and a copy is on file in the Clerks Office. This agenda is subject to change by order of the Washington Township Committee before and/or during the scheduled meeting.

ROLL CALL: Elbassiouny, present; Klingel, present; Kovacs, present; Marks, present and Strunk, present. Mary Ann O'Neil, Township Clerk, Peter de Boer, Certified Public Works Manager/Township Administrator; Barbara Emery, CFO, and Dave Evans, Auditor were also present.

SALUTE THE FLAG

SLIDE PRESENTATION

de Boer gave a slide presentation of the various needs that were incorporated in the proposed Bond Ordinance 10-05. There was discussion on the salt storage facility and replacing the 1980 dump truck. The fleet is aging and the broom is a 1985. de Boer had emailed the priority road list to the Committee.

Marks asked, if the money is borrowed, would the money be used over a time span, how long would it take? de Boer said they have not addressed this issue, it will be at the pleasure of the Committee. Marks asked how long it would take. de Boer said it could take 3-5 years. They would not be doing anything this year. They would be prepping the roads before paving and the tar and chip program.

The Mayor said they have lost over 21% of the State Aid and it is not getting any better. The school system has been hit hard as well. He felt the Committee should be concerned about the township residents overall. If the school and county raises the taxes, the residents would be hit hard. However, it is a great time to do the bond, because the interest rates are low.

Klingel said he agrees with the Mayor whole heartedly, however, these roads have not been touched in maybe 20 years. There is a safety issue with the roads. The interest rates are as low as they are going to be. And could double in a few years. The truck needs to be replaced.

de Boer said the 1980 truck was purchased for \$1 ten years ago. They have put money into it, but it is not reliable on the road any more.

Klingel said the township has done their best with the roads, but they are beyond patching and tar and chipping. If we do not take care of the problem, the roads will crumble, then what. Marks would like roads repaired, but if the Committee didn't do it for 20 years, why is it important now, just because of the interest rates. Kovacs said they could put it off for a year, just gamble with the interest rate at the time, then do a second bond, but it will cost additional money.

Strunk said he will not be voting for the bond. He will not increase the burden on the tax payers. They should pay as you go, they should find a way with the monies they have. They cannot keep borrowing and borrowing all the time. They had an opportunity last year and could have done a better job with the police contract and shared services, they would have money to pay for the road improvements that they are talking about.. Decisions made last year doomed this years budget.

Marks said they need to take care of things that need to be done. They can look at who is spending what, put better restrictions on how the money is spent and who is spending the money.

Evans said they may never see interest rates like this again. They will be going up again, probably in 2011. The needs have to be identified. He said the Committee is elected to make decisions on something like this. This ordinance will have a minimum effect on the budget next year.

Kovacs made a motion to open Bond Ordinance 2010-5, Bond Ordinance appropriating \$2,300,000 and authorizing the issuance of \$2,190,000 bonds or notes of the Township for various improvements or purposes authorized to be undertaken by the Township of Washington in the County of Warren, to the public, Marks seconded. All were in favor.

John Grigalunas, 34 Rymon Road, asked what happened to the stimulus package given to the Township. The Mayor said they did not get a stimulus package. He said if they do not fix the road now, it will never get done. There will be horrible accidents, its only a matter of time.

David Dempski, 4 Old Canal Road, said he realizes we are in a very bad economy. However, you are the governing body, you have to take care of things. The roads have heavy traffic on them. They should take advantage of the interest rates. They cannot stop governing, they have an obligation to keep the Township looking good. It is a wise decision to spread the costs by bonding.

John Renner, 47 Pleasant Valley Road, said he agrees with David Dempski. They cannot wait, it is beyond surface work, there are drainage problems, low spots and the water just pours down his driveway. He was willing to go for the bond.

Randy Anema, 83 Rymon Road, said their road actually has a major crown in it and if you pass, you end up on the side with pot holes. They have been tar and chipping for years, roads are getting worse, they need to do something. He said tar and chipping is not the answer.

Jim Vinson, 96 Rymon road, agrees the roads need to be fixed . The County will be replacing the bridge there now, so it is a good time to fix the road. During heavy rains, portions of the road are under water.

Marks said the Committee needs to tackle this project. It needs to be done. They will have to put their hats on and would like to see a plan in motion. She would like to know what roads would be done, in what order would they be done and would there be shared services. de Boer said some work will have to be contracted out. de Boer said there would be a target list, they could deviate, according to the needs. Strunk said there is no guarantee, they could change the priority. de Boer said Finelli (Township Engineers) will be applying for more grant money.

8:12 p.m. - end of public hearing.

Kovacs made a motion to close the public hearing, Klingel seconded. All were in favor. Kovacs made a motion to approve Ordinance 2010-05, Klingel seconded.

ROLL CALL: Kovacs, yes; Klingel, yes; Marks, yes; Strunk, no; Elbassiouny, yes

RESOLUTIONS

Kovacs made a motion to approve Resolution 10-56, Resolution providing for the combination of certain issue of bonds of the Township of Washington, in the County of Warren, New Jersey, into a single issue of general bonds aggregating \$8,490,000 in principal amount, Klingel seconded.

ROLL CALL: Kovacs, yes; Klingel, yes; Marks, yes; Strunk, no; Elbassiouny, yes.

Klingel made a motion to approve Resolution 10-57, determining the form and other details of \$8,490,000 general bonds of 2010 of the Township of Washington, in the County of Warren, New Jersey and providing for their sale, Kovacs seconded.

ROLL CALL: Klingel, yes; Kovacs, yes; Marks, yes; Strunk, no; Elbassiouny, yes.

BUDGET

Evans advised the Introduction of the Budget would be at the next meeting.

OTHER

de Boer had distributed a letter from Washington Borough on various issues. Strunk asked if they were going to change the date of the payment. He was advised, as per the letter, the dates in the original agreement shall remain in effect. Evans advised the payment problem only happened once and only amounted to \$1900. Kovacs made a motion to authorize de Boer to accept the agreement put forth in the letter and he and Lavery should work on a resolution for the next meeting, Marks seconded.

ROLL CALL: de Boer, yes; Marks, yes; Klingel, yes; Kovacs, yes; Elbassiouny, yes.

ADJOURN

There being nothing further to come before the Committee, Elbassiouny made a motion to adjourn at 8:25 p.m., with the next meeting scheduled for Monday, April 1, 2010, Kovacs seconded. All were in favor.

Respectfully submitted,

Mary Ann O'Neil RMC/CMC/MMC
Township Clerk