

TOWNSHIP OF WASHINGTON, WARREN COUNTY

Budget Meeting Minutes
March 5, 2011

The budget meeting of the Township Committee was held on this date at the Washington Township Municipal Building, 211 Route 31 North, Washington, N.J. The meeting was called to order at 10:05 a.m. by Mayor Samir Elbassiouny.

SUNSHINE LAW COMPLIANCE – The Mayor noted this meeting is being held in compliance with the Open Public Meetings Law of 1975 in as much as a notice has been published in the Star-Gazette and transmitted to the Express-Times, posted at the Municipal Building and a copy is on file in the Clerk's 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; Finke, present; Klingel, present; Kovacs, present; Marks, present. Anna C. Godfrey, Acting Township Clerk; Peter deBoer, Township Administrator/Certified Public Works Manager; James McDonald, Police Chief; Dave Evans and John Mooney, Municipal Auditors; Barbara Emery, Chief Financial Officer; Suzanne Heerwagen, Deputy Treasurer; Thomas Cicerelle, Lieutenant; and Jeff Cooper, Assistant Municipal Supervisor of Public Works were also present.

SALUTE TO THE FLAG

2011 BUDGET DISCUSSION

Mayor Elbassiouny stated he understands the CFO and auditor re-worked the numbers to assure their accuracy. D. Evans explained as of the last meeting, a portion of the open space revenue is being taken to offset the debt service, police numbers were changed slightly in regards to the two shared service agreements, B. Emery reduced a number of line items by 5% and we are now at a 5.8 increase over last year which translates to approximately \$12.00 per month for the average household.

Administration - Mrs. Marks noted \$4,000 is listed twice for Elections. B. Emery replied that although it is under the admin elections heading it can be used anywhere in the overall Administration budget. Mayor Elbassiouny asked if there are any anticipated purchases in administration. A. Godfrey replied the \$900 encumbered for the codification of ordinances is not enough to cover the cost. The Committee discussed the Administration budget with A. Godfrey. Mayor Elbassiouny questioned the copier expenses. Mr. deBoer noted the Committee and Land Use Board packets are the biggest expense when it comes to the copier and suggested having the Committee become paperless by purchasing either a laptop or an iPad as previously discussed. Mayor Elbassiouny recommended waiting to discuss this after the budget discussion to see where we stand.

Mr. Finke asked about the police line items. D. Evans and B. Emery explained how Oxford and the Boro share the police costs.

Mrs. Marks noted the average expense for the copier is \$1,100 per month. D. Evans stated if the Governing Body is comfortable with going paperless, an ordinance could be adopted for equipment acquisitions in order to purchase laptops and then see a significant reduction in copier costs for 2011. D. Evans clarified \$4,000 was taken from admin elections, \$2,000 was added to office supplies, \$400 was added to the true election line item, \$1,100 was added to codification, \$1,500 was taken from advertising, \$1,000 was taken from admin dues, and \$1,500 was added to copier cost for a net savings of \$1,500.

Finance – B. Emery explained the numbers increased because of payroll services and the auditor. D. Evans clarified his fees have not increased. B. Emery will also need to take classes to keep up her CEU's this year. Mrs. Marks questioned the miscellaneous expenses. After a brief discussion, \$3,000 will be taken out of the miscellaneous line item and placed in office supplies.

Tax Assessor – Mr. deBoer stated both the Tax Assessor and Tax Collector explained to him their budgets are tight. There are things that need to be done that cannot be changed. The Tax Assessor also stated she would need to update the tax maps. Mr. Kovacs will get clarification from the Assessor and ask the Engineer to provide us with a quote. Mr. deBoer will discuss the computer expenses with the Assessor. Mr. Kovacs suggested the Committee liaison to each department review the budget prior to the meeting and discuss any questions with the appropriate department beforehand.

D. Evans stated the budget will probably not be introduced until April with a May adoption. Mr. Kovacs left the meeting at this point.

Legal Expenses – Mayor Elbassiouny explained what is covered under this line item. No changes were made to this line item.

Municipal Court – Mr. Finke questioned why O/E went up 26%. B. Emery stated it was the contracted amount. Mayor Elbassiouny noted the overall number came down \$6,000. As it is contractual, it must remain at \$4,785.

Storm Water Management – Mr. deBoer explained there are things that need to be done every year. He will contact the Engineer for an explanation of what will need to be done this year and feels a \$2,000 budget is reasonable.

Buildings & Grounds O/E – Mr. deBoer explained more line items were added for the Police, DPW and Buildings & Grounds. Mrs. Marks questioned the amount spent on watering the fields. Mr. deBoer stated we had a drought last summer and explained the fields need to be maintained to help withstand some of the wear and tear on them. Mayor Elbassiouny questioned getting a well. It was decided that would not work. Mrs. Marks questioned the fertilization program. J. Cooper said the park is sixty eight acres that needs to be sprayed for weeds and grub control. Mr. Klingel stated he was asked if we choose not to spray, can the Panthers Organization hire someone to do it. Mr. deBoer explained the policy about being certified and having the proper credentials. The Committee discussed the fees for both the park and building maintenance. Mayor Elbassiouny asked Mr. deBoer to see if anything can be done to reduce the amount spent on cleaning the office mats.

Tax Collector – B. Emery stated the Collector has a second mailing that needs to be done per the State. Mr. deBoer will speak to the Tax Collector regarding the computer expenses. The Committee discussed the purchasing of computers.

Land Use Board Professionals – Mayor Elbassiouny feels we should keep the line item at \$12,000 due to possible litigation.

Police Salary & Wages – Mrs. Marks questioned the crossing guards. D. Evans explained how each municipality reimburses the Township and where those contributions can be seen.

Police O/E – Mr. deBoer stated he has been working with the Borough Manager who has questions regarding the mechanic and also reminded the Committee that any capital purchases need to be approved by both Governing Bodies. D. Evans explained a police car is not a capital expense. Per Mayor Elbassiouny, D. Evans will e-mail information to Mr. deBoer which he can forward to R. Phelan. The Committee discussed police vehicles and the equipment that is used in them. Chief McDonald stated there is a County mandate that a particular brand of equipment must be used to maintain uniformity. Mr. deBoer noted paying as we go, rather than bonding, as well as extended warranties, have saved the Township a lot of money over the years. The Police had a depleted fleet and are in the process of getting on a schedule. Mayor Elbassiouny and B. Emery explained the pay as you go program to Mr. Finke. Mr. Finke questioned leasing vs. purchasing. D. Evans explained both options. Mrs. Marks questioned education. Chief McDonald stated he was told the money was transferred from miscellaneous into the proper line item. D. Evans explained Oxford and the Boro are charged first as we are the host municipality. Chief McDonald added their expenses have not increased for a long time.

Walter Godfrey, Recreation Commission Chairman, was now present at the meeting.

Mr. Finke would like to eliminate vehicle purchases from the budget. Mayor Elbassiouny explained how this will make it more difficult in later years. D. Evans and the Committee explained the services offered by the municipality to Mr. Finke. Mrs. Marks questioned selling the recreation building. Mr. deBoer stated it cannot be sold as it is deed restricted for recreational purposes only. Mr. Klingel suggested renting out the building for parties. Mayor Elbassiouny feels what makes Washington Township attractive are the services we provide. It will cost us to maintain these services because we do not have rateables coming in.

Rescue Squad – Mayor Elbassiouny recommends keeping the line item at \$25,000 to maintain the service to the residents.

Emergency Management – The Committee decided not to make any changes to this line item.

Road Department – Mr. Klingel stated it cost \$22,998 to run the Convenience Center, we brought in \$5,863 in revenue which shows a deficit of \$17,135. He suggested the possibility of raising the fees or changing the hours of operation. Mr. deBoer stated the shared service agreement with the Boro has fallen through and gave a brief history of this facility which has been made compliant with DEP

regulations. It became a convenience center for grass and branches as well as recycling. He further explained it is not required by the State, rather it is a service to the residents, and can be closed down at any time. Mr. deBoer explained the process for vegetative waste and work needed to maintain the facility to Mr. Finke. Mr. Finke suggested making it available to non-residents. Mrs. Marks explained it was abused in the past and used as a dump. Rates have not increased since it opened. Mayor Elbassiouny suggested adjusting the curb side pickup fee. Mrs. Marks would like a cost analysis done on what it takes to maintain the park as well as all services we provide. Mr. Klingel noted out of approximately 7,000 residents, there were 51 curbside pick-up passes and 230 Convenience Center passes sold last year and questioned if it's worth keeping the facility open. Mrs. Marks asked where the money came from for the five cameras that were purchased for the Convenience Center last year. Mr. Finke suggested opening the center to contractors. Mr. deBoer explained it is a convenience to the residents and cannot be used by contractors. The Committee discussed their options. Mayor Elbassiouny asked Mr. Klingel, Mr. deBoer and J. Cooper to work together and come back with some recommendations, including the grant we receive.

Mayor Elbassiouny asked how we are doing with overtime. J. Cooper stated the employees are using comp time and noted seasonal employees will begin on April 1st. Mrs. Marks questioned the need for part-time employees and would rather the DPW handle the work. Mr. deBoer discussed how the need to hire part-time people was decided and how his and J. Cooper's jobs have changed and taken them away from the park. The Committee discussed the differences between hiring part-time employees versus full-time employees. Mrs. Marks will prepare a cost analysis of the Road Department. Mr. Klingel feels we should be wrapping up the budget at this point in the budget process.

Mrs. Marks asked about the new street sweeper. Mr. Klingel stated bids were requested but a decision has not been made yet. A motion was made by Finke, seconded by Marks, to take the \$31,000 for the street sweeper out of the line item.

ROLL CALL: Finke, yes; Marks, yes; Klingel, no; Elbassiouny, no
Motion died.

Bulk Purchase - Fuel – B. Emery stated the line item increased because of the cost of fuel. Mr. Finke questioned the amount for heating oil at the parks & recreation building and suggested closing the building for the winter to save money. Mr. deBoer stated there are programmable thermostats in the building which help control the costs.

Recreation – Mr. Klingel stated he was asked to look into paying the salary of the recreation secretary out of recreation fees because it is a Green Acres facility. He spoke to the Township Attorney and is waiting for a response. W. Godfrey stated he had been told the use fees collected by the Commission are to be used for maintaining the park or purchasing park and/or sport equipment. Mayor Elbassiouny doesn't feel the Township should be paying the secretary's salary as the person in that position is hired by the Commission. W. Godfrey stated he would like clarification on this.

Contingent Expenses – D. Evans explained why we need to keep this line item. No changes were made.

PERS Contribution – D. Evans explained the reason for the increase in the employer's share of the pension.

Recap – D. Evans explained \$4,500 was added to the expenses. The next meeting is scheduled for March 26th. We are at 5.9 cents which equates to \$12.00 per month for a home assessed at the Township's average of \$250,000.

Mr. deBoer stated he would like to place an employment ad on the Township website for temporary DPW personnel. Mayor Elbassiouny gave his permission.

Mr. deBoer provided the Committee with papers from Finelli Consulting Engineers regarding Pleasant Valley Road, Section 3. The Township was awarded \$175,000, and Committee approval is required for the cost for survey work, preparation work, etc., not to exceed \$8,000. A motion was made by Klingel, seconded by Marks, to approve these costs, not to exceed \$8,000.

ROLL CALL: Klingel, yes; Marks, yes; Finke, yes; Elbassiouny, yes

EXECUTIVE SESSION

A motion was made by Klingel, seconded by Marks to approve Resolution 11-41, Resolution Authorizing Executive Session for a Meeting Not Open to the Public in Accordance With the Provisions of the NJ Open Public Meeting Act, N.J.S.A. 10:4-12 at 1:47 p.m. All were in favor. Mayor Elbassiouny explained the Committee will be discussing possible contractual negotiations with Oxford regarding the Police

issue, personnel matters, and contractual negotiation updates from the meeting with the Unions representing the Township. No action will be taken during Executive Session.

A motion was made by Klingel, seconded by Finke, to come out of executive session. All were in favor. Mayor Elbassiouny stated the Committee returned from executive session at 2:47 p.m. The shared service contract with Oxford was discussed; negotiations with the Public Works and Police Unions as well as two personnel issues were also discussed. No official action was taken. Copies of these minutes will be available at such time the Committee determines there is no harm to the public interest.

PAYMENT OF BILLS

A motion was made by Klingel, seconded by Finke, to approve the payment of the bills.

ROLL CALL: Klingel, yes; Finke, yes; Marks, yes; Elbassiouny, yes

Mrs. Marks discussed the 2% increase to the Tax Assessor and CFO and the give back of 1.5% of the others who received a 2% increase. Mayor Elbassiouny suggested going to those two individuals and ask them to give back the same percentage. The Committee discussed the employee increases.

ADJORNMENT

Hearing no further business to come before the Committee, a motion was made by Klingel, seconded by Finke, to adjourn the meeting at 3:10 p.m. All were in favor.

Respectfully submitted,

Anna C. Godfrey
Acting Township Clerk