

TOWNSHIP OF WASHINGTON, WARREN COUNTY

Budget Meeting Minutes
February 28, 2015

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 10:00 a.m. by Mayor Robert Klingel.

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

Iacobucci, present; Klingel, present; Kovacs, present; Willan, present
Rossi, absent

STAFF PRESENT

Ann Kilduff, Deputy Township Clerk; Peter deBoer, Township Administrator/Certified Public Works Manager; Dave Evans and John Mooney, Municipal Auditors; Kevin McCarthy, Chief Financial Officer; Chief McDonald; Deputy Chief Cicerelle, Lieutenant Teter; and Jeff Cooper, Assistant Municipal Supervisor of Public Works

SALUTE TO THE FLAG

Mayor Klingel explained the budget meeting process to public.

RESOLUTION

A motion was made by Kovacs, seconded by Willan, to approve Resolution 15-45 and 15-46. Mrs. Iacobucci explained Resolution 15-45.

15-45 Resolution to Join New Jersey Sustainable Energy Joint Meeting

15-46 Resolution Authorizing the Execution of an Interlocal Service Agreement Between the Township of Washington and the Pollution Control Financing Authority of Warren County for Solid Waste Disposal

ROLL CALL: Kovacs, yes; Willan, yes; Iacobucci, yes; Klingel, yes

PUBLIC QUESTIONS AND CONCERNS

Mayor Klingel opened the meeting to the public.

Kathy Fiore, 162 Mine Hill Road, questioned the purchasing procedure of medical supplies and why over \$4,000 was spent on this in 2014. J. Cooper explained the various first aid kits supplied by Zee Medical in a cooperative purchasing agreement. K. McCarthy explained each department has their own budget for these. K. Fiore would like the Committee to do their best for the residents.

Nancy Anderson, 11 Kinnaman Avenue, asked if there is an overtime budget for the Police Department as she feels it is out of control. Deputy Chief Cicerelle stated the Township taxpayers cover approximately 40% of the cost as it is a shared service. N. Anderson would like the overtime costs to be addressed in 2015. She would like to be sure the Committee members look at the bills before approving them.

Jeff Duckworth, 28 Coleman Hill Road, would like to see how much is spent on mowing and field maintenance. It is not obvious how much the Township is spending.

Joel Schnetzer, 240 Cemetery Hill Road, asked how Farmland Preservation is being funded and if there are plans for a Farmland Advisory Committee. Mayor Klingel stated there is a grant for approximately \$70,000 and it is unsure at this time if the Township will match that amount. J. Schnetzer feels the State Agricultural Board will unlikely fund the Township if the Township is unwilling to match the grant. He asked if there are plans to sell the old backhoe. J. Cooper stated he is currently working on this and hopes to have it sold next month. J. Schnetzer discussed the backhoe with J. Cooper and Mayor Klingel.

Hearing no further comments, Mayor Klingel closed the public portion of the meeting.

2015 BUDGET DISCUSSION

J. Mooney explained at this point in the budget process, the Township is approximately \$250,000 below the expenditure cap and approximately \$270,000 below the tax levy cap. This represents a two cent increase to local residents with an average home value of \$250,000 which is a \$51.00 increase per year or \$4.26 per month. The Township is responsible for approximately 17% of the total tax bill. Tax collection rate is 96.41%. Mr. Kovacs stated the uncollected taxes amount is high and driving much of the Township's tax rate. The Committee discussed the tax collection rate and surplus.

K. McCarthy explained his budget preparation procedure and highlighted the items driving the budget. The Finance Department budget is increased to allow for an upgrade in the general ledger system. Healthcare expenses are higher due largely to the Affordable Healthcare Act. Mr. deBoer explained the increase in electricity is due to the traffic light at the intersection of Brass Castle Road and Route 57. The Committee discussed.

The Committee discussed various line items with K. McCarthy, D. Evans and J. Mooney. Mr. Willan noted the Police and Public Works Departments have overall come in under their 2014 budget.

PUBLIC QUESTIONS AND CONCERNS

Mayor Klingel opened the meeting to the public.

Nancy Anderson, 11 Kinnaman Avenue, asked what the overtime budget will be for the Police Department in 2015 and how much will come from Shared Services. K. McCarthy stated it will be \$284,000. Chief McDonald explained the amount is not broken out that way as overtime is driven by activity and explained the procedure. Steps are taken to minimize overtime. N. Anderson discussed with Chief McDonald. N. Anderson asked for the Public Works Department's overtime budget to which K. McCarthy stated \$46,000. N. Anderson discussed the employee healthcare costs with K. McCarthy. N. Anderson asked for clarification on the Tax Assessor's salary and discussed with Mr. deBoer. N. Anderson questioned the three entries for propane on the February bills list. J. Cooper explained deliveries are more frequent in the winter. N. Anderson asked if the Township's bonds are at a fixed rate and what they are for. J. Mooney replied they are fixed rates. One bond is consolidated bond anticipation notes and he is unsure of the other bond. The total amount of both bonds is \$9.4 million. N. Anderson discussed aggressively paying down the debt with J. Mooney and D. Evans.

Carol Kain, 96 East Asbury-Anderson Road, asked who has cell phones and do they have family plans. Chief McDonald stated the Police Department is required to have cell phones and explained the procedure. C. Kain would like the Township to use motion sensitive lights at the new DPW garage and discussed a property on Route 31 near the Hawk Pointe Golf Course with the Committee.

Tammy Firmin, 9 Pebble Beach Way, feels it is time to change the way the Township does things through drastic change and sacrifice. She would like to see a 20% cut across the board.

Joel Schnetzer, 240 Cemetery Hill Road, asked what percentage of uncollected taxes is commercial and residential. Mr. Kovacs replied it is approximately half. J. Schnetzer would like the Township to be sure something works without using grant money before accepting a grant.

Kathy Fiore, 162 Mine Hill Road, asked why the Township has so many lawsuits. Mrs. Iacobucci explained the Township does their best to stay out of court, but some things are out of the Township's control. K. Fiore stated there are many foreclosures in the area. She feels senior citizens are struggling and encouraged everyone to get involved with Habitat for Humanity.

Hearing no further comments, Mayor Klingel closed the public portion of the meeting.

EXECUTIVE SESSION

A motion was made by Iacobucci, seconded by Willan, to approve Resolution 15-47, 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 12:14 p.m.

ROLL CALL: Iacobucci, yes; Willan, yes; Kovacs, yes; Klingel, yes

Mayor Klingel explained the Committee will be discussing two personnel matters dealing with the Department of Public Works, a personnel matter dealing with the Police Department, a contractual matter dealing with the Warren County Open Space Advisory Committee with regards to the next steps of the Friese property, and a contractual matter dealing with Washington Borough.

A motion was made by Willan, seconded by Iacobucci, to come out of Executive Session at 1:36 p.m. All were in favor. Mayor Klingel stated the Committee discussed two personnel matters dealing with the Department of Public Works, a personnel matter dealing with the Police Department, a contractual matter dealing with the Warren County Open Space Advisory Committee with regards to the next steps of the Friese property, and a contractual matter dealing with Washington Borough. 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.

A motion was made by Willan, seconded by Kovacs, to approve Resolution 15-48, Resolution Authorizing the Sale of Surplus Property to the Borough of Washington for Nominal Consideration.

ROLL CALL: Willan, yes; Kovacs, yes; Iacobucci, yes; Klingel, yes

Mayor Klingel stated the next budget meeting will be held on Saturday, March 14, 2015 at 10:00 am. Mrs. Iacobucci will speak to the Township and Regional Schools for their budget numbers to date.

ADJORNMENT

Hearing no further business to come before the Committee, a motion was made by Kovacs, seconded by Willan, to adjourn the meeting at 1:40 p.m. All were in favor.

Respectfully submitted,

Ann Kilduff
Deputy Township Clerk