
TOWNSHIP OF WEST MILFORD, COUNTY OF PASSAIC, NEW JERSEY

Minutes of: Governing Body Special Meeting
Date of Meeting: April 7, 2014
Time of Meeting: 7:30 P.M.
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Mayor Bettina Bieri called the Special Meeting of the West Milford Governing Body to order.

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 published in the Herald News on April 6, 2014; copies were provided to the Record, Star Ledger, Suburban Trends 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, and rear of this room - for use in case of an emergency. Thank you.

Pledge of Allegiance

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

Roll Call

Present: Councilmembers Ada Erik, Michael Hensley, Michele Dale,
Luciano Signorino (arrived at 7:43 p.m.), Carl Horton, Mayor Bettina Bieri.
Absent: Vivienne Erk.
Also Present: Interim Township Administrator Robert Casey, Township Clerk Antoinette Battaglia,
Township Attorney Fred Semrau.

Agenda No. II

Purpose

Review of the proposed 2014 Municipal Budget.

Formal action will not be taken at this meeting.

Agenda No. III

Review of 2014 Municipal Budget

2014 Volunteer Organizations – Mr. Casey said first aid will begin. He said everything is under Tab 6, public safety. Upper Greenwood Lake first aid requested \$41,500 and Mr. Casey reviewed their expenditures. They wish to discuss capital which is not included. Mr. Casey reviewed the request of West Milford first aid and their actual expenditures last year.

Upper Greenwood Lake First Aid Squad – Ted Hajek, Treasurer thanked Council for considering their budget request. Capital requests, he said, were not approved. The UGL first aid squad is asking for \$6,500 to install a staircase. There is an upstairs facility that could be used to allow crews to stay at the building if needed. It only has one exit. Their second request was for \$8,000 to redo the meeting room floor. The building has many different purposes and uses including events, voting, and community groups. The floor was recently damaged by water. That completes their total capital budget request. The floor is carpet squares and the priority is the stairs. Mr. Casey said that request was not included in the budget request which was an error.

West Milford First Aid Squad – Ken Cuneo, President West Milford First Aid Squad, said that when he received the budget request it was sent back with reductions. They are now operating with a patient care report which is electronic. Each rig has an ipad. This will help with state requirements for digitized records. The cost for hosting that is an additional \$8,000 per year and the reporting is a lot of work. They decided to change over in advance of the state requiring this process. The state will require this in two years. It is coming and they are being preemptive. Mr. Cuneo said that he has a request without a number. Their parking lot needs resurfacing and they are asking that it be funded in the DPW budget. It probably has to be milled too. It is about 14,000 square feet. The \$8,000 they are requesting is to host WiFi patient care reports every month. This is the most cost effective means to handle the reports. This is better than owning the program. UGL could utilize the same system. The ipads are the cheapest part of the process. If UGL purchased the ipads they could store with West Milford for about another \$2,000 per year. Mr. Casey said the budget recommended for them provided an increase of \$11,000. That was based on historic trend lines. He increased their request somewhat but not up to the full request. Councilwoman Dale asked why there was an increase from \$17,500 to \$35,000. Mr. Cuneo said that actual expenditures came out of other accounts for vehicle maintenance. They are requesting actual expenditures. Mayor Bieri said individual line items change but the bottom line is the same. Councilwoman Dale asked if the vehicle repairs are expected to be so high with two new vehicles in the fleet and she asked how the budget is going from \$72,600 to \$111,500. Councilwoman Horton agreed and said she would like a justification for a 50% increase. Mr. Hajek said that at the end of the year, often you forego needed items because there is a lack of funds. Councilwoman Horton asked if all forms are submitted by our non-profits. Councilwoman Dale asked about the 2012 numbers. Mayor Bieri said that

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the budget for a number of years is about \$79,000 and this year's request is \$111,500. Mr. Cuneo said that you cannot know who qualifies for stipends. The CFO said she does not have 2013 returns. Every year her department has difficulty getting records from these groups but she does have 2012 returns. Mayor Bieri said that makes sense because the filing deadline is May 15th. Councilman Hensley said he is confused as to how the budget went from \$72,000 to \$111,000 and Mr. Cuneo said it is based on stipends. Councilman Hensley said the stipend request is only up \$10,000. Mr. Cuneo said he has requested more each year and those funds are not granted. Councilwoman Dale said the clothing allowance is also doubled. She said stipends always vary & our experience is half of the amount requested is actually expended. She is trying to understand why the clothing allowance is double. Councilwoman Horton said that is why the 990's are important. It is important to see what contributions have been made from the public. Mayor Bieri said the problem is the total went from \$72,000 to \$111,000. Mr. Cuneo said last year he requested \$112,000 and was approved for \$72,000. Councilwoman Dale asked if that increase included the \$8,000 for WiFi and Mr. Cuneo said yes.

OEM – Ed Steines & Fred Stewart addressed the Council. Mr. Casey reviewed the budget request & the actual expenditures last year. Mr. Casey said he reduced the request and Mr. Steines asked that funding be restored for the quarterly testing of generators. It costs about \$1,000 per generator which is \$12,000. Mr. Steines said the generators cost a lot of money to buy and he recommends that they be properly & regularly maintained. They will not serve the purposes intended if they are not maintained. He said he requested a \$5,000 increase for equipment. The Township has an SAR team that never asks for anything. They have ropes that are 10-15 years old and it is scary. They have 15 members & 8 helmets. They desperately need new equipment. Councilwoman Dale said there should be a separate line item for SAR rather than being part of the OEM budget. Mr. Steines said they did get clothing allowances last year and Ms. Goscicki said it may not have been charged to the right line. Mr. Casey said the Township needs to formalize SAR as a recognized unit of the governing body. Otherwise, they are out there unprotected. If designated as volunteers they will get some level of protection. He said that he will have something on a future agenda to amend the ordinances to recognize them formally. Mayor Bieri said it would make sense to formalize their efforts and Councilman Signorino said he is concerned that Mr. Casey said we don't know if they are protected. Mr. Casey said fire & first aid volunteers are covered by state law with very specific requirements. He doesn't know if that applies to SAR. Mr. Steines said members have been sent to hospital and they were covered. Councilwoman Dale said we should know where the clothing allowance was charged last year adding that there needs to be better accounting. She said we need to know where the clothing stipend was charged to and we need other line items to be properly designated. If there is a request for SAR equipment there should be a line item for that. The CFO said she will get an accounting of clothing allowances made to SAR. Mayor Bieri agreed that it makes sense to fund maintenance of the generators. Councilman Hensley asked about the appropriations for food & provisions. Mr. Steines said that is for major incidents such as house fires, 24-hour calls, and first aid & fire department major incidents where volunteers are working for extended periods with breaks. Mr. Casey said it would appear that the clothing allowance was charged to the fire department in error.

Fire Prevention - Fred Stewart reminded Council that he has been acting as interim fire marshal. He said he has not made any request for changes to the operating budget. The S&W appropriation is not sufficient. He has also requested funding for a part time fire inspector 2 days per week. He explained the historic staffing levels and the number of units to inspect in town. There has been a significant increase in workload & increased state regulations & paperwork. He feels there is a definite need for an additional part-time person that would cost about \$25,000 to \$26,000 without benefits. Mr. Casey said there will be a new calculation for S&W since this budget was drafted. Mr. Casey said that Mr. Stewart feels that there is a need for a full time fire marshal & two part time inspectors. Discussion ensued about historic staffing levels prior to 15 years ago. Mr. Stewart said they can't keep up with the workload.

Fire Department – Ed Steines addressed the Council. Mr. Casey said he cut the budget request based on actual expenditure history. He said the department asked for a significant increase. Councilwoman Dale said the cleaning supplies history shows that the department spent \$2,000 last year and is asking for \$6,500. Mr. Steines said that they did not buy flares last year and PEOSHA is getting strict about cleaning. The supplies are based on the number of accidents. Mr. Stewart said it costs \$60-\$100 per set of clothing for cleaning. Councilwoman Dale asked about vehicles. Mr. Steines said this appropriation covers the cost for vehicle repairs for the chiefs, assistant chiefs and company-owned vehicle repairs. Councilman Hensley asked why we pay for repairs to company-owned vehicles and Mr. Steines said it is historical. Mr. Casey directed Council a few lines down noting that the appropriations therein are for municipal-owned vehicles which has a large request. He said the Township insures, fuels & repairs these vehicles. Councilwoman Dale said that she was of the understanding that the assumption is the individual fire companies can repair the vehicles. Mr. Steines said that town owned vehicles are getting older and sufficient funds are not being appropriated for repairs. He explained the brake job repairs

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pending adding that the DPW budget is not sufficient to cover the costs and it is budgeted here in the fire department. These, he said, are recurring expenses.

Councilwoman Dale asked for an explanation of appropriations for “alarm to recall” noting that nothing had been charged to that line. Mr. Steines said it is insurance. Councilman Signorino asked if these records are reviewed before coming to Council and Mr. Casey said all department heads get what is presented to Council. He will find out about the alarm to recall bill. Mr. Casey said the big issue in the fire department is what is not budgeted. The heavy-duty response truck is \$500,000 and Mr. Steines thinks it is necessary this year. Councilwoman Erik said we bond for fire trucks and current economic conditions indicate that this is a good time for borrowing. Mr. Casey said this was not included in capital request. Mr. Steines handed out information about a proposed fire apparatus replacement plan for 2014 through 2018. He said he is requesting replacement of a vital piece of equipment. He asked Keith Hansen to join him. Mr. Hansen introduced himself saying that he is the Township’s supervising mechanic. Rescue 4, he said, is a 1994 vehicle that is well maintained. It is washed & clean. The problem is the electrical failures. He explained the wiring panel. It has become brittle & is open to the elements. He explained the cumulative effect and the concerns. There is a potential to have a failure during a rescue. He explained issues with the cab and what measures he has had to take to keep it operational. There are systems that are failing on the truck that could be disastrous. Mayor Bieri asked if we can replace the electrical panel only and Mr. Hansen said he cannot but he has bypassed many of the systems. He provided details. The new truck is upgraded and the electrical system is enclosed. Mr. Hansen said this truck has served the Township well for 20 years. He explained what this equipment is used for to extract people from vehicles. The main concern is that it would fail on scene. Councilwoman Dale asked Mr. Steines to provide estimated costs for his replacement plan. Mr. Steines said he proposes that the Township trade in vehicles in the future when we replace them.

Mr. Steines said he requested funding for FIT testing replacement which is needed. Councilman Hensley said \$11,000 was added to line 618 and Mr. Steines said that represents actual expenditures for pagers. Mr. Steines said that there is an increase in line item 50 because we are reaching the lifespan on turnout gear and we have been cited by PEOSHA for that. A complete set is \$2,099 and the average lifespan is 15 years and we have replaced some. Mr. Stewart said physicals are every year for older fire fighters and every 3 years for younger firefighters. Mayor Bieri noted that if the Township wanted to adhere to the replacement schedule, we should be purchasing 13 sets of turnout gear every year. Mr. Stewart explained line of duty death which is a \$5,000 annual stipend to surviving spouse. He said it should be raised to \$10,000.

2014 DPW Budget Request – Mr. Casey gave an overview and reviewed staffing patterns & history. The DPW Director is requesting to go to 34 people which would restore the department to 2009 levels. Mr. Casey introduced Joe Clementi & Kirk Bakker. Mr. Casey said there are three big issues in DPW - streets, road striping & the asphalt budget. The snow budget is being maintained at last year’s level because the reserve account was charged for the exorbitant costs this year but the snow budget is almost depleted and we will have to be mindful of possible end of year storms. Councilwoman Dale asked what was in the snow reserve account and how much was used and CFO Goscicki said she will get those numbers. Mr. Casey explained changes in state law that allow this reserve to be used for various weather conditions adding that any weather costs between now & 12/31 will come from reserves. Mr. Casey said Keith Hansen will speak about large vehicle needs and there are capital requests for buildings. The Council will look at the solid waste budget because of expiring contracts and because tipping fees are scheduled to increase when the new contract starts in September.

Streets & Roads – Mr. Casey reviewed last year’s budget saying that he increased the budget request to cover extra asphalt because of this year’s weather. Road striping, he said, is an issue for Council to discuss. Mr. Bakker said that the \$90,000 appropriated last year was not sufficient to adequately stripe the roads and he is confident the requested \$125,000 should be sufficient. The hope is to stripe every road once every year. Mr. Casey said that with the appropriations in 2013, the DPW could not do white striping at the side of roads this year. Councilman Signorino asked what the guidelines are for striping. Mr. Steines said it is based on an assessment with the proper tools. The expectation would be that this would be an annual appropriation in this amount to adequately stripe the entire town. Councilwoman Dale asked about increase from \$16,000 in road materials to \$25,000. Mr. Casey said that account was used for materials for road repaving projects. This funds the preliminary work for road projects and its purpose is to rebuild inventory. Council took exception to the expenditures & appropriations and Mr. Casey said the Council should focus on the bottom line. Councilwoman Dale said she wants to fund things where they are needed and therefore must understand the individual line items. Councilman Signorino asked about a \$100,000 appropriation some years ago for catch basins that he said was not expended. Mr. Casey said it was moved forward for road resurfacing. Discussion ensued about DPW doing catch basin work for road resurfacing work. Council members Signorino & Dale said Council appropriated \$100,000 to catch basin repair that is now being re-appropriated to road resurfacing with

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Councilman Signorino saying that he would like to have a discussion about catch basin repair. Mr. Casey asked about priorities saying that he believed the priority is road resurfacing. Councilwoman Dale said not necessarily, it is about good expenditure of taxpayer dollars. She said Councilman Signorino is talking about funding the catch basin repairs to see if it will work with more cost efficiency. Councilman Hensley said having good catch basins makes for better roads and it would be beneficial to know what it would cost to do catch basins in-house & road resurfacing in-house. Once those numbers are examined there should be a cost comparison. Mayor Bieri said DPW is capable of doing the work but only so much can be done with the resources available. There are 4,000 catch basins in town she said and Councilman Signorino said we will never catch up. Mayor Bieri said that to do it all in-house Council would have to fund increases staffing levels. She said Mr. Ferriero has a separate division in his firm that does only catch basins. We could ask him what \$100,000 would accomplish. Mr. Casey said he understood that the main priority is asphalt. He kept capital expenditures down to \$500,000. Councilwoman Dale said if there are good expenditures it is worth spending the money. Mr. Casey will review the numbers and Mayor Bieri asked Mr. Bakker to speak with Mr. Ferriero. Councilwoman Dale said there is a consensus that DPW is understaffed and the Council would like to decrease that stress & look at the budget to see where that can happen. Mayor Bieri said the question is are we better off doing this work in-house or contracting out. Mayor Bieri thanked Mr. Bakker for all he has done to keep this department operating in the absence of a Director. Council agreed and commended him.

Councilman Signorino asked where road signs fit into the budget. Mr. Casey said those are funded in the road division and he reviewed the budget requests. Councilman Signorino asked where the money goes to and Mayor Bieri replied that signs are replaced when it is reported that they have been removed. Mr. Bakker said he currently has 33 items on his list for signs and Councilman Signorino asked for that list.

Public Properties – Mr. Casey said the state mandates a process for public building accounting whereby utilities have to be handled separately. Tim Ligus, Construction Official, explained the buildings covered in the public properties account which does not include Hillcrest. Mr. Ligus explained the history of repairs in certain buildings. In the capital request he is asking for funding for door replacements for the police department saying that the current doors violate fire codes. The estimated cost is \$7,000. He explained the current conditions and efforts to repair saying that, in his opinion, they need to be replaced. He said the boiler room pipes need insulation noting that they are new systems and need insulation because we will lose heat as well as it being an OSHA requirement. The other big item is IT because there is a need to replace the air conditioning unit for our servers. That unit runs 365 days 24 hours per day and the current unit is 10 years old. If it fails, the Township's computer systems will fail. He is requesting a new air conditioner and plans to use the existing one as a backup for an approximate cost of \$8,000. There are other items he would like to see done but he will make those requests next year. Other than that, Mr. Ligus said, the budget is stable. He said next year we will have to replace salt buildings and Mr. Casey explained the use of the county salt building at DPW. When they build the new building the Township has to pay anything in excess of \$800,000. He will amend budget accordingly noting that the County will be going out to bid this month. Tim Ligus thanked Jill Knipp for all she has done since the former DPW Director retired.

Vehicle Maintenance – Mr. Casey said there has been consistent requests to increase staffing but he has not appropriated for increased staff in this year's budget. He said the big request \$220,000 for parts but he approved \$180,000. The deteriorating condition of the fleet is the issue. Keith Hansen, senior mechanic, distributed information. Mr. Casey said DPW requested 4 new trucks & 2 mason dump trucks and Mr. Casey reduced the requests in half. Mr. Hansen disagrees and wants the capital budget increased for new equipment. He also distributed photos of vehicles to depict the deteriorated condition. He said two are so bad he pulled them off the road. Mr. Hansen asked Council to look at his proposed vehicle replacement program. Cars coming from police department have excessive mileage he said adding that the mileage is odometer miles, not hours. He showed a sample of the hours recorded on these vehicles. A 2013 Ford Explorer has 6,000 hours and the Ford Motor company calculates that 1 hour of idle time equates to 33 miles of driving. That equates to 99,000 miles already. That particular vehicle has an odometer of 43,000 miles as of this morning. This vehicle has not been in service a year yet. We are getting good service out of these cars but it is imperative that these vehicles are rotated into the municipal fleet earlier. He explained the maintenance done before they are rotated in saying that the Township needs a renewable source. The Township could purchase a Ford Focus for \$15,000 under state contract for use by a non-police department. The DPW has some 1998 vehicles in the fleet. The cabs are rotted out and they have been spray foamed to keep weather conditions out. He would like to have a replacement program for annual expenditures rather than large one-time expenditures. Councilwoman Dale asked what the cost savings would be and Mr. Hansen said there would be a new fleet costing around 200,000 apiece. Councilwoman Dale asked what the cost savings would be. Mr. Hansen said the mechanics are so good they have not lost one engine. Councilwoman Dale asked what the cost savings would be annually and Mr. Hansen replied that if we keep going this way he will expend \$600,000 in repairs. For a \$1 million expenditure it would save \$600,000 in repairs annually.

