
TOWNSHIP OF WEST MILFORD, COUNTY OF PASSAIC, NEW JERSEY

Minutes of: Township Council Special Meeting
Date of Meeting: April 21, 2014
Time of Meeting: 7:30 P.M.
Minute Page No: Page 1 of 4

Mayor Bettina Bieri called the Special Meeting of the West Milford Township Council 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, Vivienne Erk, Michele Dale,
Luciano Signorino, CarlLa Horton, Mayor Bettina Bieri.
Absent: None.
Also Present: Township Administrator Robert Casey, Township Clerk Antoinette Battaglia,

Agenda No. II

Purpose

Review of the proposed 2014 Municipal Budget.

Mr. Casey directed the Governing Body to his memo noting that the goal tonight is to review that memo with Council proposing suggested changes, engaging in discussion, and proffering individual ideas.

Capital – open space grant program – coffee house part II. Mr. Casey said that phase I of this project was funded by the Township Council but phase II was not. Mr. Casey described the proposed improvements to the tennis courts, pool, pavilion and retainer wall. The good news, he said, is that since part of this grant is for the old roller rink carried forward there is about \$44,900 in an old ordinance that can be brought forward requiring funding of \$30,000 to fund the full project. These are preliminary estimates. Councilwoman Dale said coffee house does not appear to be a thriving entity and Mr. Casey agreed that attendance has been lower than expected. Council asked for attendance records.

Mr. Casey said the Township bonded for \$1,940,000 last year and he is proposing the same level of bonding this year which includes a fire truck. Councilman Signorino said he said that he recalls that the bonding number last year was less saying that the Council approved bonding in an amount that would not result in an increase to the debt threshold. Ms. Goscicki said it was \$1.6 million. Councilman Signorino expressed concern about the impact of bonding for the new library. Mr. Casey noted that the library has the bond down payment funds on hand and discussion ensued about how the funds would be paid back from the library. Mr. Casey advised that the actual amount bonded last year was \$1,605,000 and the remaining amount in the ordinance was for other items, not capital bonding. Councilwoman Dale said she would like to fund some of the DPW capital requests because there will be a long-term cost if we don't begin funding new equipment. She asked if Mr. Casey got the numbers that would reflect cost savings on repairs. Discussion ensued about repairs versus new purchases. Councilwoman Dale said that if the Township purchased new vehicles & equipment, there must be cost savings on repairs. She said we are wasting money by spending on repairs. Mr. Casey said he put the minimum requirements in the budget which include two mason dump trucks & two single axle trucks. Councilman Signorino said he is fine with those requests. Mayor Bieri said that the request reflects the minimum requirement and Councilwoman Dale said she needs to know what the cost of repairs were for other vehicle requests and what projected repair costs are to compare to the cost of new vehicles.

Mr. Casey said he did not recommend funding for the coffee house but rather recommends that the Township notify the County that the project will be downsized. The Council agreed and gave consensus to Mr. Casey to notify Passaic County officials. The Council reiterated their request for attendance numbers and Councilwoman Horton asked to receive a plan for the use of the coffee house. Mr. Casey advised that phase I is schedule for completion this Spring.

TOWNSHIP OF WEST MILFORD, COUNTY OF PASSAIC, NEW JERSEY

Minutes of: Township Council Special Meeting
Date of Meeting: April 21, 2014
Time of Meeting: 7:30 P.M.
Minute Page No: Page 2 of 4

CYO – Mr. Casey said this request is to fund environmental testing to determine what can be done on site. Mr. Casey showed a concept plan based on what was originally submitted to the county. The issue that makes the site difficult to use is parking. There are environmental constraints that warrant getting approvals and any remaining balance would go into design. An application has been submitted for the playground area and the next need would be bathrooms. This will be classified as a rehabilitation project once we know what will be allowed under Highlands. The grant requires \$50,000 in matching funds from the municipality. Councilman Hensley said the lack of parking does not dissuade him. There is a large school parking lot nearby and the facility won't be used until after school hours. He would like to see a walking path from the school to CYO.

Bubbling Springs – Mr. Casey said this request represents a required match for a new grant. To proceed, the Council must appropriate \$47,000 and the goal is to begin work this fall. Councilwoman Dale asked if we can use the money for coffee house part II and, with Council consensus, Mr. Casey will make that request of the County.

Farrell Field – Mr. Casey said the rehabilitation of the field is funded in the operating budget. He listed all the requests which he rejected saying that he did recommend funding one lighting tower.

Roads division – Mr. Casey said he has proposed funding for a plate vibrator as well as two big & two middle size trucks with two salt spreaders. DPW has requested a service truck that field services other equipment because the existing one is no longer functional. The budget also reflects a request for matching funds for the county salt shed in an amount of \$50,000.

Public buildings – Mr. Casey advised that there are capital requests to replace doors in town hall and to insulate pipes in the boiler room. Councilman Signorino said he thinks the doors are expensive and he wants to receive information about what is being proposed. Mr. Casey said the other police capital requests are being funded in the operating budget.

Engineering – Mr. Casey said the Westbrook match is \$325,000. He advised that the lower dam at Bubbling Springs has not been approved by DEP and the retrofit can be funded with existing budget funds. Mr. Casey said this is related to a court case. The road resurfacing program is looking to fund \$1.1 million and they have found some funding in old ordinances. The goal is to achieve 5 miles this year. There are also requests for funding for storm drainage updates & a large format copy machine. Councilwoman Horton said she does not agree with the \$17,500 for the copy machine and Mr. Casey said he will research rental cost.

ACO vehicle - Mayor Bieri asked if the Township can use the equipment from the existing truck and purchase a less costly vehicle. Mr. Casey will check the cost and have the mechanic provide a report.

Mr. Casey said he is not recommending the purchase of new vehicles for departments.

Technology – Mr. Casey advised that the Network Administrator is asking for email upgrades to prevent an issue in future years. He said there is funding for technology replacements which is an annual request for maintenance & upgrades. Council said it should be in operating not capital. Council wants to know what the plan is for replacement. Councilman Signorino asked what the IT operating budget is and Mr. Casey reviewed it. Mr. Casey noted there is also a request to replace the air conditioning system in main server room.

Fire department – Mr. Casey said the department asked for \$60,000 but he budgeted \$30,000 based on prior year's history. Mr. Casey will advise Council how much they have historically spent.

UGL staircase – Mr. Casey said this budget reflects appropriation for this capital request. The Council gave consensus to fund a new fire truck.

Councilwoman Erik said she attended many insurance classes at the NJLM. There is a machine called a LUCAS which is an automatic CPR device. Insurance companies suggest all ambulances carry it. Three companies have this machine to protect both the patient and the EMT. Prices have come down and she suggests, we have 6 ambulances, we need to fund one for each ambulance, at a cost of \$13,000 each. Councilwoman Dale said there are other means to provide for safety including belts for EMTs. She said the device is worthy but should be perfected before purchase. She said there are other restraint systems that we can ask EMTs to wear. The Council agreed that the first aid squads should research this matter and if they deem it necessary they can potentially request funding next year.

Administrator Casey reviewed budget revisions saying that the capital improvement fund is seriously depleted inhibiting the funding of emergency repairs. He recommends adding \$50,000 to it. He reviewed

TOWNSHIP OF WEST MILFORD, COUNTY OF PASSAIC, NEW JERSEY

Minutes of: Township Council Special Meeting
Date of Meeting: April 21, 2014
Time of Meeting: 7:30 P.M.
Minute Page No: Page 3 of 4

the reduced PERS & PFRS payments due to contributions being made by municipal employees. He said bond interest can be reduced because of favorable bond rates. There was a duplicate insurance payment that removes \$9,800 from the budget and he recommends restoring funding for emergency generator maintenance, parts for fire trucks, the 20 Mountainside wall, various remediation cleanups, and fire prevention salaries. There is a reduction to the salaries & wages due to changes in staffing in the Clerk's office. Mr. Casey advised that is a \$20,000 appropriation for judgments and there may be a major judgment coming.

Mr. Casey asked for direction from Council. Councilwoman Horton said she does not favor the changes proposed in the finance dept, saying she is not inclined to hire two new police officers, and not inclined to approve additional support in the health department to administer the septic pumping ordinance. Councilwoman Dale asked that revisions to the septic ordinance be scheduled for a future workshop discussion. She said she needs more information about community services & recreation specifically related to costs & programs. She heard we offered a class with only 3 attendees even though there are private businesses that offer the same service. She does not agree with the municipality competing with local business. Councilman Signorino echoed those comments. Councilwoman Horton said that she would like to see the analysis of the savings realized from the fuel system approved in last year's budget. Councilwoman Dale agreed asking for information & data specific to vehicles used by various fire chiefs.

Finance department – Mr. Casey said the CFO recommends that her position be made full time in West Milford which would eliminate the Ogdensburg shared services agreement. Ms. Goscicki has also recommended that the part time person in her department be hired on a full time basis. She said the staff is having a hard time performing all the functions within their jurisdiction and there are not enough bodies to improve internal controls. Mayor Bieri noted that taking one person from part time to full time does not address segregation of duties. She asked how much overtime is attributed to that department and Mr. Casey said none. The cost for the proposed changes, he said, would be about \$16,000. Councilwoman Horton said she does not want to make another person full time. She would prefer to achieve results through overtime or another part time person. Ms. Goscicki said that West Milford has never had a clean audit. She has been cleaning up messes for three years and she will go over details with any individual at any time. She gave an example of the fixed asset audit saying it was originally done but never maintained. She explained problems with old grants. Mayor Bieri agreed that there was a lot of cleanup needed but she said the expected result is that management is less work now than before. Council asked if a part timer one day a week would work. Mayor Bieri said she would like to see cross training in the entire finance department adding that she has been requesting this for years. She explained in detail saying that one part time person should fill in at the tax office during collection times and that person should be trained in the tax assessor's office, the accounts receivable/payable office & payroll so that all divisions can be covered when a need arises without using floaters or employing more staff. She said there should be an analysis stating that she has also been asking for that for years. An analysis, she said, should be done before Council is asked to make a decision. Councilwoman Dale agreed saying that she is more favorable to a part timer until a complete analysis has been done and the Council has had time to think about this. Councilwoman Horton said every department is seeking increased staffing resulting in a bottom line we cannot afford. Councilman Signorino said he is inclined to say no to the proposed changes in finance. Mr. Casey said we should have office hours in assessor's office rather than increase staff. He agreed that we may need one part timer in finance who is cross trained among all divisions. The Council gave consensus for an additional part time person in the finance department who will be cross trained amongst all the divisions in that department.

Police department – Councilmembers Hensley, Erk, Dale, Signorino and Horton said they did not want to hire new police officers as proposed. Councilwoman Erik said she favors hiring additional police officers. Councilwoman Dale said she read the FBI Leeda report noting that there were a lot of recommendations made. West Milford, she said, offers a lot of special services that are not standard in other communities or other police departments. We are only department with a specialized dive team. She wants to know if we use these resources. There are other recommendations that would reduce manpower training for special services. It is expensive to have these special services but we must know how much we are spending on them and how much we utilize them to determine if they are warranted. Councilwoman Horton said the average officer makes over \$100,000 where the average income in West Milford is \$51,000 according to the 2010 census.

Health department – by unanimous consensus the Council agreed not to fund additional salaries for administration services related to septic ordinance when the ordinance does not achieve its goals.

DPW – Councilwoman Dale said the Council needs more analysis on DPW as requested at prior meetings. Mr. Casey said there is no budget request except to move Mr. Bakker from engineering to DPW. Councilwoman Dale said she is more inclined to improve equipment & vehicles and wants all the analyses so that Council can take a hard look at DPW. Council agreed DPW is a priority. Mayor asked if

