

Borough of Tenafly

MAYOR AND COUNCIL

BUDGET MEETING MINUTES

SATURDAY, FEBRUARY 6, 2016

PRESENT: Mayor Peter Rustin and Council members Maxim Basch, Shama Haider, Daniel Park (arrived at 9:56 a.m.), Paul Stefanowicz, Mark Zinna

ABSENT: Councilmember Anthony Barzelatto

ALSO PRESENT: Borough Administrator Jewel Thompson-Chin, Chief Financial Officer Susan Corrado

At 9:09 a.m. Mayor Rustin read the Open Public Meetings Act Statement: "In compliance with the Open Public Meetings Act P.L. 1975, chapter 231, the notice requirements have been satisfied. Meeting dates for the year are listed in the Annual Agenda; copies are sent to the Record, Suburbanite, and Northern Valley Press and posted on the bulletin board in the lobby of the Municipal Center. The notice of this special budget meeting by Resolution #16-48 has been sent to the Record, Suburbanite, and Northern Valley Press, has been posted on the bulletin board in the lobby of the Municipal Center and Borough Website."

PUBLIC COMMENT:

Gloria Layne – inquired why the Nature Center comes to the budget meetings since they're a non-profit organization. Mayor Rustin responded that the Nature Center receives an annual stipend to the Borough.

ADMINISTRATION

Mrs. Thompson-Chin explained that the budget as presented is at 1.9%. She noted that between 2011 and 2015 there have been salary freezes among the various unions and 2016 is the first year all employees are budgeted for increases. Fixed costs, such as insurance, pensions, and utilities keep increasing.

With regards to the budget under Administration, Mrs. Thompson-Chin advised that there is no change in staffing, but is recommending a stipend for \$2,500 for a supply clerk to oversee the central supply. Funds were allocated annually for interns; however, the need for interns has declined. Therefore, those funds are being reallocated for this stipend. Additionally, there is a new appropriation line for general office supplies for Borough Hall to put the central supply program in effect. Those funds are collected from reducing office supplies from other departments by about 75%.

The HPC requested a significant increase, which was not approved at the requested level because their expenses for prior years were less than what had budgeted. A reallocation of funds within line items is what has been recommended.

FINANCE

Mrs. Corrado referenced that the salary for the CFO position is higher than last year because the prior CFO worked only 4 days. The Finance Department is understaffed and more reporting and data management is required under the Affordable Care Act. Mrs. Corrado has recommended converting a part-time employee to full-time to work both in tax collection and payroll, which is more feasible and more likely to reduce the turnover in the department. This employee is cross trained and covers several finance functions. Edmunds will be implemented later this year.

BOROUGH CLERK

Ms. Aportela reviewed the budget for the Borough Clerk, Council, and Election. She advised that there has been an increase in commercial OPRA requests. As a result of this increase and hands on training, she recommended that the Executive Assistant be promoted to Deputy Clerk. Council concurred with the recommendation. The Borough Clerk and the Borough Administrator will coordinate to the implementation of the salary change and eventual title change. With regards to capital, there is a need to upgrade the recording equipment, which is used among various boards and the municipal court.

Mayor Rustin recommended a stipend of \$50 per meeting for the students that film the meetings. Mrs. Thompson-Chin and Ms. Aportela advised that it would be a new line item in the Council budget account.

Mayor Rustin recommended that funds be provided to upgrade the studio for the local access channel, which broadcasts the Council meetings and hopefully lead to the expansion of recording Planning Board and Board of Adjustment meetings. Mrs. Thompson-Chin will coordinate with Mrs. Corrado to identify funds instead of creating a new expenditure. Ms. Aportela identified that she anticipates a \$3000 balance in codification which can be applied towards the contribution.

TVAC

Captain Max Moehlen reported that TVAC enrolled 20 new members last year. The state has increased the mandatory training requirement, but stopped paying for it. As a result, the education and training line item has increased over time to reimburse those who take the courses and have passed. There was a discussion on billing health insurances for ambulance transportation services. Captain Moehlen will review how other municipalities are processing the bills and expressed reservation on how billing may impact donations. Captain Moehlen described the issue of maintenance costs for oil leaks. C. Park will review with the County about vehicle maintenance services.

MUNICIPAL COURT

Judge Allen Bell presented a flat operating budget and reported that over the past year the volume of cases has increased. The court was complimented by the judiciary as one of the 3 municipalities in the county with no backlog. The increase involved criminal and disorderly cases. The court is averaging 50 to 90 defendants per calendar. Judge Bell advised that the court is still seeking a part-time violations clerk. It is a funded position, but they've had trouble filling it. Judge Bell recommended the possibility of sharing a deputy court administrator with Cresskill. Mrs. Corrado commented that she had received many resumes for the part-time finance clerk position and will forward those that she has not selected to interview for Judge Bell to review. Judge Bell requested that a new desktop computer be added to the capital budget and that the court office be reconnected to the alarm system. With regards to the public defender, Council approved raising the compensation to the state level from \$100 per case to \$200 per case.

At this time, the meeting was recessed at 11:22 a.m.

The meeting resumed at 11:33 a.m.

FIRE DEPARTMENT

Fire Chief Richard Philpott noted that there are 3 new members, one who was a member of the junior firefighter program. He stated that morale is good and he is coordinating with DPW Director Culvert on the response time of DPW members. Chief Philpott referenced the increase associated with the maintenance of vehicle. He requested an allocation of \$5,000 for another inspector. An application for a new vehicle under the Assistance to Firefighters Grants program was submitted earlier this year.

POLICE DEPARTMENT

Police Chief Robert Chamberlain reviewed budget and that outsourcing for IT support has worked well. There was discussion about a traffic signal replacement program. With regards to the accreditation process, the police department has passed inspection and is expected to be officially certified in March, which will yield an annual savings on the insurance premiums. For the emergency response team, Chief Chamberlain is seeking a nominal increase for equipment and training. With regards to fleet maintenance, Chief Chamberlain requested the replacement of a patrol vehicle and an administrative vehicle. Council requested that the CFO provide an updated balance on the off-duty use of vehicles trust to evaluate in order to offset the cost of the replacement vehicles.

ADJOURNMENT:

As there was no further business to come before the Council, on a motion by C. Zinna, second by C. Park, and unanimously carried, to adjourn this meeting. The meeting was adjourned at 12:49 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Lissette Aportela,
MPA, RMC, CMC
Borough Clerk