

Borough of Tenafly

MAYOR AND COUNCIL

BUDGET MEETING MINUTES

MONDAY, FEBRUARY 6, 2012

PRESENT: Mayor Peter Rustin and Council members Martha Kerge, Nadia LaMastra, Jon Warms, and Mark Zinna

ABSENT: Council members Anthony Barzelatto, Barry Honig

ALSO PRESENT: Borough Administrator Jewel Thompson-Chin
Chief Financial Officer Gene Vinci

At 7:06 p.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 News and posted on the bulletin board in the lobby of the Municipal Center. The notice of this special budget meeting via the February 1, 2012 Sunshine Notice has been sent to the Record, Suburbanite, and Northern Valley News and posted on the bulletin board in the lobby of the Municipal Center."

BUDGET OVERVIEW:

Mrs. Thompson-Chin explained that is portion of the meeting is to look at specific issues involving revenue summary, appropriations summary, surplus analysis.

Mr. Vinci noted that under the revenue portion of the budget, the Borough is making the assumption that state aid would be the same as last year, but he will not be notified on the actual amount until end of the month. Also, the amount of municipal surplus appropriated will be the same as last year. He highlighted the increase of UCC fees collected last year as well as the significant drop in fines and court costs. He explained that account to the Court Administrator and Police Chief there were 5400 tickets in 2010 and 3800 tickets written in 2011. The reason for the decline is because the number of officers decreased from 5 to 1. He advised that the auditor is suggesting interest on investments to be reduced to \$20,000 due to low interest rates. Therefore, the budget forms will be revised and distributed for Thursday's meeting.

Mr. Vinci explained the significant changes in the appropriations summary of the budget. Mrs. Aportela-Hernandez explained the increase in the Elections budget was due to the federal mandate of translating the ballot in Korean. Mr. Vinci noted that there is a \$25,000 increase in the Legal budget due to costs associated with contract negotiations, which will include the Police union this year. The decrease under State UCC was attributable to reorganization of the department and the decrease under the DPW is due to attrition in salary from retirements. Under Recycling there is an increase in the rental of equipment required to dispose of vegetative waste. As for Buildings and Grounds, the increase is to compensate for some additional salaries for custodial services for Police Headquarters as well as general increases in utility costs. Mr. Vinci stated that the increase in salaries in the Police Department is only 0.9% as retirements offset the new hires, but there are the purchase 2 vehicles in the budget, as no vehicles purchased last year. Mrs. Thompson-Chin advised TVAC wants to increase incentives to attract more members. Under the Fire Department the secretary's salary was prorated as she serves the Fire Prevention Bureau as well as the Fire Department. Mr. Vinci advised that the Auditor has recommended that the reserve for uncollected taxes increase by \$100,000 because the collection rate has gone from 98.6% to 98.2%. Another recommendation involves increasing the capital improvement fund from \$40,000 to \$60,000 to cover any unforeseen increases.

PUBLIC COMMENT:

No one came forward.

ADMINISTRATION:

Mrs. Thompson-Chin prefaced that throughout the departments no raises are anticipated for 2012, but salaries continue increase due to longevity and step increases where applicable.

Mrs. Thompson-Chin proposed reallocating the funding for the AESOP employee attendance program partnership with the Board of Education, since benefits for sick and vacation are in such flux due to the ongoing contract negotiations to support an employee recognition program as initial starting capital to assist with planning. She recommended budgeting funds for technical support for the website as well. She explained that the function of public health services was assigned to Administration due to the restructuring last year of the Department of Code Enforcement. She noted a slight increase in the Environmental Commission's budget for ongoing activity under Sustainable Jersey as the Green Team is trying to achieve "Silver" status.

FINANCE DEPARTMENT

Mr. Vinci explained that the Borough pays a \$3500 fee for Cit-eNet to administer the online payment for taxes. He advised more and more residents are using it, which should reduce the number of walk-in and mail-ins. The Conference and Meeting line decreased as the Assistant Tax Collector has completed classes and is now a Certified Tax Collector. He has not received notification from the BCUA on the 2012 sewer charges, but was advised verbally that the rate would be a 3.5% increase. Until it is received in writing, the increase is subject to change.

Mayor Rustin reported that the Board of Education is meeting tomorrow and is requesting to get an answer on going ahead with a generator, in which the Borough will pay for 50% of the cost of project, as well as an extension of 5 years of the technology contract at 2% increase annually. He explained that timeline constraints require the generator to be installed by the summer. Mrs. Thompson-Chin explained that for the Board of Education, their share of the cost of the generator is an operating expense, but the Borough's share is required to be raised. Mr. Vinci further explained that a bond ordinance is the funding mechanism for the Borough's share. Council discussed funding the project under the contingency of reviewing bids and specs.

ADJOURNMENT:

As there was no further business to come before the Council, on a motion by C. Kerge, second by C. Warms, and unanimously carried, to adjourn this meeting. The meeting was adjourned at 8:49 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Lissette Aportela-Hernandez, MPA, RMC
Borough Clerk