

Borough of Tenafly

MAYOR AND COUNCIL
BUDGET MEETING MINUTES
MONDAY, MARCH 7, 2011
7:30 P.M. – 10:00 P.M.

The meeting was called to order at 7:38 P.M. with the reading of the Open Public Meetings Act statement by Mayor Rustin.

Present:	Mayor Peter S. Rustin
Council members:	Anthony Barzelatto, Barry Honig, Michael Lattif (via telephone,) Martha Kerge, Nadia LaMastra, Jon Warms
Borough Administrator:	Jewel Thompson-Chin
Director of Senior Center:	Julie Villafuerte
TVAC Captain:	Max Moehlen
Construction Official:	Robert E. Byrnes
Absent:	Councilman Anthony Barzelatto

Mayor Rustin read the following statement:

"Public Comments: A total of 15 minutes has been allocated for this purpose. Citizens are welcome to address the Mayor and Council on any governmental item of concern to them, whether or not it is scheduled on the agenda below. Citizens must give their names and addresses when recognized to speak. Large groups are urged to select someone to represent them. The public is advised that these meetings are recorded and are subject to the Open Public Records Act."

There was no public comment.

Police Budget Review Status

Gene Vinici, CFO, provided Council with a spreadsheet detailing the prorated salaries for those officers who had retired or resigned as well as five promotions and three hires at the probationary rate. He advised that with these changes, the budget is approximately \$87,000 lower than the original budget for this year and approximately \$250,000 higher for 2012. C. LaMastra questioned the number of promotions that had been authorized as she believed Council had authorized six promotions. C. Honig questioned whether this spreadsheet had included fringe costs and Mr. Vinci advised that it just included salaries. C. Honig expressed his opinion that hires cannot be discussed without having the fully-loaded numbers. Mrs. Thompson-Chin was directed to confirm the number of promotions authorized and Mr. Vinci is to revise the spreadsheet to include the fringe costs.

DCA Budget Update

Due to time constraints, this item was deferred to the March 10th Budget Meeting.

Senior Center – Julie Villafuerte, Director

Mayor Rustin questioned whether most classes are self-supporting and Ms. Villafuerte advised that they are and any additional funds are used for entertainment. Ms. Villafuerte provided Council with a sheet detailing her budget changes, a

copy of "Resource Guide for Older Adults & Their Families" and a copy of February's monthly report. She also distributed the March 2011 Newsletter and pointed out that there is a new section highlighting benefits available to seniors. She advised that she prints 1,000 copies and some are mailed while the others are placed in the Library, Borough Hall, local churches, and doctor's offices.

Council discussed issues such as the condition of the building, raising fees for non-residents who use the Senior Center, acquiring community development funds, and programs for seniors who are homebound. Ms. Villafuerte advised that the building is very old and she will need to sit down with Joe Rossi and Bob Beutel to discuss improvements that may need to be made. In terms of fees for non-residents, she advised that because federal funds were used to build the center, everyone has to be treated equally. She added that Bergenfield sends the center many volunteers. C. Kerge asked that the source of the funding be checked as she thought that there were private donations. Mayor Rustin commented that if the Borough was to obtain funding to purchase vans, a driver would need to be hired and insurance obtained. He asked Ms. Villafuerte whether she thought a lot more people would use the center if they had a means to get there. She was unsure whether it would help to increase attendance. As far as reaching out to homebound seniors, Ms. Villafuerte advised that they have tried to provide programs, but have not gotten a response from information placed in the newsletter.

Mrs. Thompson-Chin advised that Ms. Villafuerte did have some minor changes to her budget. Ms. Villafuerte pointed out that the budget for the internet account increased by \$400 in order to have the Senior Center computers connected to the Borough network. There was a \$2,550 reduction in the line item for supplementary staff due to the hiring of a second staff employee, the new Assistant Director.

Ms. Villafuerte ended by expressing her concern about the decrease in services for seniors through the health department. Mayor Rustin suggested reaching out to Englewood Hospital to see what support they can offer. He also suggested that Ms. Villafuerte attend a Board of Health meeting and make them aware of the needs of the Senior Center.

Council took a brief recess at 8:32 p.m. and resumed at 8:40 p.m.

TVAC – Max Moehlen, Captain

Max Moehlen advised that in 2010, TVAC responded to 900 to 1,000 calls, including the collapse of the roof at Tenafly Gourmet and an incident in which four juveniles were struck by a vehicle. He also noted that there are approximately 20 new members and as of now, he does not have enough full uniforms or pagers for everyone.

Mr. Moehlen advised that the vehicle maintenance line item has increased due to four vehicles requiring service. Of the four, he explained that the two ambulances are his first priority. Mayor Rustin asked Mr. Vinci if it would be prudent to put money aside every year for the purchase of new vehicles so that the budget doesn't take a major hit when a vehicle needs to be replaced. Mr. Vinci responded that a reserve, or a sinking fund, can be established. Mayor Rustin remarked that in Mr. Moehlen's Capital Budget, he is requesting two new ambulances and two first responders. Mr. Moehlen commented that one of the first responders had first been a police car and it now has over 100,000 miles on it. He stated that many of the lights are out on the dashboard and as a result, they are unable to see their speed at night. C. Kerge questioned who determines whether a vehicle should be repaired or replaced. Mr. Moehlen responded that all vehicles are taken to Clinton Auto and the Captains and the person in charge of rig maintenance make the determination. Mayor Rustin suggested reaching out to Loretta Weinberg to see if a grant can be obtained to purchase these vehicles. Mr. Vinci advised that two police cars had been purchased in 2010 and therefore, two vehicles would be coming out of their fleet. Mrs. Thompson-Chin is to check with Chief Bruno to see if the police can turn over a SUV to TVAC. Council also requested that at least \$2,000 be added to TVAC's vehicle maintenance budget. Council expressed their support for establishing a sinking fund. Mrs. Thompson-Chin stated that she would also check with the Riverside Coop and look at the League's website for any vehicles up for auction.

Mayor Rustin suggested that there be a discussion on a future work session on honoring TVAC and the Fire Department over the summer.

Code Enforcement – Robert E. Byrnes, Construction Official

Robert Byrnes advised that Code Enforcement's overall budget went down while several line items increased. He explained that business slowed down in 2009, revenue increased in 2010 with 250 or more permits being issued, and in 2011, he noted that the volume of business is already ahead of last year. He advised that a few more houses will be started this year as there is some paperwork already in zoning and building plans are under review. He remarked that there have been several builders who have come in looking for more properties, many of whom are building spec houses.

Mayor Rustin questioned how this budget should be handled as the structure of this department, including the elimination of the health department duties, is currently under review. Mrs. Thompson-Chin responded that Council should focus on the UCC portion, operating expenses, and where we stand in relation to other towns. She advised that Council can look at the day-to-day activities of this department and consider changes. She remarked that in other towns, the permit office closes at lunch and inspections are done by appointment only. She asked Council whether they would like to consider hiring an outside agency to conduct inspections or have the State handle the elevator inspections. Mr. Byrnes advised that if a third party is to conduct inspections, it would be paid for by the permit fees and the Borough would only be allowed to charge a 15% administrative fee. This fee would be the only source of income. He said that the clerical help would be the only personnel in the department and their salary would need to be covered by the 15% administrative fee. He advised that, again, there could only be a 15% administrative fee for elevator inspections through the State and right now, Code Enforcement earns a 40% profit with elevator inspections conducted in-house.

Mayor Rustin questioned whether Mr. Byrnes feels that the Borough is doing a good job in enforcing the codes. Mr. Byrnes responded that the Code Enforcement Officer tries to be consistent with enforcing the codes, but is more stringent when it comes to contractors. C. LaMastra questioned whether the Code Enforcement Officer still comes in on the weekends and Mr. Byrnes advised that if issues arise on the weekend, he adjusts his hours and does work the weekend. C. Warms pointed out that not all of the complaints dealt with by the Code Enforcement Officer result in summons. Mr. Byrnes agreed, stating that some issues are resolved with a phone call or a warning and the Code Enforcement Officer documents these instances.

C. LaMastra asked about the two new hybrid vehicles and Mr. Byrnes responded that they are working out well. As far as maintenance, they have only needed to be serviced once since they were purchased. Mayor Rustin asked for Mr. Byrnes' recommendation on fleet management practices. Based upon his experience in other towns, he believes that the Borough is better off to purchase new vehicles for the TVAC & Fire 1st Responders and Chief/Captains' vehicles. He expressed his opinion that hybrid vehicles are a good investment. He also believes that a vehicle should essentially be assigned to one employee as they tend to treat it as their own.

C. Warms commented that it was very difficult to see the big picture for this department as each division is on a separate page. Council asked that Mrs. Thompson-Chin prepare a summary of the entire department and she advised that she could provide that document to Council by the next day.

ADJOURNMENT

There being no further business to come before the Council, on a motion from C. LaMastra, second by C. Honig, and all present voting in favor, the meeting was adjourned at 9:43 p.m.