

MINUTES OF THE BUDGET MEETING OF
THE TEANECK TOWNSHIP COUNCIL CHAMBERS ON
THURSDAY, JANUARY 26, 2012

Mayor Hameeduddin called the Open Session Meeting of the Teaneck Township Council to order at 7:00 p.m. and asked all those present to rise for the Pledge of Allegiance.

Mayor Hameeduddin asked all those present to remain standing for a moment of silence for Patrick Crowley, who passed away suddenly.

ROLL CALL

Present: C. Parker (arrived at 7:12 p.m.), C. Stern (arrived at 7:29 p.m.) DM. Gussen, C. Honis, C. Toffler, Mayor Hameeduddin.

Absent: C. Katz

Also Present: W. Rupp – Ferrara, Turitz, Harraka & Goldberg Esqs.; W. Broughton, Township Manager; J. Evelina, Township Clerk; I. Abbasi, Executive Assistant.

MAYOR'S ANNOUNCEMENT

Adequate notice of this meeting has been provided by Resolution 28-12, setting the 2012 meeting dates, sending a copy to THE RECORD and THE JEWISH STANDARD, filing a copy in the Township Clerk's Office and posting it on the Municipal Building bulletin board, and the Mayor hereby directs that this statement be included in the minutes.

MEETING OPEN TO THE PUBLIC FOR GOOD AND WELFARE OR PUBLIC INPUT ON ANY MATTERS ON THIS AGENDA

Mayor Hameeduddin spoke highly about Patrick Crowley, who served on several Teaneck Township Boards, stating that he was a wonderful asset to this community.

Mayor Hameeduddin inquired whether any member of the Council had any comments prior to opening the meeting to any comments from the public.

C. Toffler also spoke of her sadness regarding the sudden passing of Mr. Crowley, indicating that Mr. Crowley had planned on attending the meeting this evening; and spoke of his compassion and dedication for the Township.

Mayor Hameeduddin declared Good and Welfare and Public Input on Any Matter on the Agenda open to members of the public. Members of the public who came forward provided the following information, and comments were limited to five minutes per person.

Helga Shreshian, Teaneck resident – spoke of funding the Senior Center, indicating that some seniors are being locked out of the exercise programs due to space restrictions; emphasized that exercise is extremely important for seniors; spoke of cost savings for the registration process; gave a brief synopsis as to the registration mail process; and felt that same was flawed and unfair; and stated that the registration process should be handled as a lottery process to provide a fair chance for each senior.

Joan Oddie, Teaneck resident – spoke of the recreation programs and the outstanding job by the Recreation Superintendent, Glenna Crockett; feels that the senior program is a victim of its own popularity; and urged an allocation for more funds for additional classes to prepare for the increasing senior population.

Resident, (no name provided) – spoke of a car accident which knocked down three poles on Windsor Road; informed that after making many phone calls to the Township and PSE&G, nothing had been done to repair or replace the lights which had been knocked down during this accident; and expressed fear for the safety of others indicating that it is a very dark area.

Claire Seiffer, Teaneck resident – spoke in memory of Patrick Crowley; and suggested increasing of all exercise facilities, not decreasing them.

Dr. Alex Rashin, Teaneck resident – spoke of the difficult economic situation and suggested a zero percent increase in taxes; questioned DM. Gussen’s statement on the possibility of increase in leaf removal, indicating many trees had been damaged, and therefore, there is a likelihood of less leaves; does not feel that increasing the recreational expenditures is a wise choice, as monies should be spent in other more important areas; praised the Township Clerk, Ms. Evelina and the Team for the daily work they produce but suggested using less paper by using an electronic system; questioned the hiring of dispatchers; questioned the pistol range maintenance and the increase in lighting; suggested looking at every item and cutting wherever is possible; and requested clarification on the above-listed matters.

Ken Hoffman, Teaneck resident – represents the PPRAB; stated that recreation actually saves money; felt that the more activities that are provided, the better service for the residents; also felt unlimited funds would increase activity within the Township; and strongly urged the Rodda Center be used fully.

Ken Korn, Teaneck resident – suggested the lights in the parks be turned off when they are not in use.

There being no further persons who wished to speak, Mayor Hameeduddin declared that the public comment portion of the meeting was closed.

Mayor Hameeduddin inquired whether any member of the Council or the Manager wished to respond to the public comments.

Mayor Hameeduddin addressed several of Dr. Rashin’s concerns with the budget; explained that the plan is to combine fire and police dispatchers in order to take firefighters off of dispatch, as, this will incur considerable savings; explained that the light abatement at the pistol range is a must; and encouraged residents to contact the Manager or Council with any concerns they may have.

C. Toffler spoke regarding the Recreation Department suggesting putting into place a “task force” so that seniors who may have ideas can put them into place in order to make the Senior Program superlative.

Mayor Hameeduddin stated that Patrick Crowley did meet with the Manager regarding a problem that had developed with the seniors. The Manager then had a meeting with the seniors and the problem was rectified; stated that if a problem does arise, the same plan should be implemented wherein the Manager will meet with the seniors and address any issues they may have.

Ms. Crockett stated that there is a group known as “Friends of the Seniors” who are also involved in solving any issues as well.

Mayor Hameeduddin requested distributing applications for the Senior Citizen Advisory Board in an effort to reconstitute the Board.

2012 BUDGET REVIEW

1. Recreation Department

The Mayor stated that the Budget Review for the Recreation Department would be discussed first; and asked the Manager if the daytime exercise program could in fact be moved to the gym.

Township Manager William Broughton informed the Mayor that Ms. Crockett would address this question; spoke about the Senior Citizen Advisory Board, indicating that if there are any issues which need to be addressed, they are welcome to come to the Manager or Council for assistance; spoke very highly of the Senior Program and how popular it has become; also commended Glenna Crockett, the Superintendant of Recreation and her staff for building such a successful program.

C. Toffler also commended the Recreation Department and the Senior Center.

The Manager spoke about salary requests stating that he put in a request for an additional part-time driver for the Recreation Center; requested additional funding for the Senior Center to assist in expanding the program; and asked Ms. Crockett to speak on the different programs and the registration process.

Glenna Crockett gave a detailed description as to how the registration process works; discussed the gymnasium at the Recreation Department, stating that the second floor was supposed to be used for seniors only, however, they have migrated downstairs; gave a brief synopsis of each of the programs offered by the Recreation Department and explained that the state-licensed child-care facility needs to have activities in the gym; felt it is important to not have more than fifty people in each class, as it then becomes a safety hazard but would rather add classes; informed that the increase in funding would allow the Recreation Department to add additional classes; spoke about the need for an additional driver as the senior population has increased; and discussed limited parking availability.

DM. Gussen asked Ms. Crockett about the parcel of land across the street and questioned if it could possibly be used as a parking facility.

Ms. Crockett informed the Council that crossing Palisade Avenue is very dangerous.

DM. Gussen spoke on the lack of traffic-calming devices in the area, requesting further studies be completed; and asked Ms. Crockett about the tremendous increase in enrollment for the Recreation Center.

Ms. Crockett addressed this question with the numbers of individuals who partake in the classes, as well as, those who are on the waiting list.

DM. Gussen asked if there are any classes that may be less popular and inquired whether or not reprioritizing should be a consideration.

Ms. Crockett explained that there are really no classes that are not popular.

C. Toffler inquired whether or not there are individuals who may sign up for a class, come to one or two of the classes and never come again; and questioned if there is a way to monitor this situation.

Ms. Crockett stated that there is only one full-time staff member, so monitoring the attendance is not possible.

Mayor Hameeduddin stated that although these concerns are valid, the budget is what should be discussed at this time; he further stated that the SCAB or the "Friends of the Seniors" may have some suggestions regarding these matters; and discussed the budget for registration materials.

Ms. Crockett informed Council that the mailing budget for Recreation is not included in the Recreation budget.

DM. Gussen questioned whether the fields being off line for some period of time impact the recreation program in any way.

Ms. Crockett stated that the summer camp does not use the ball fields therefore; this portion of the program is not affected.

DM. Gussen inquired whether or not this would affect the Recreation budget in any way.

Ms. Crockett stated that the only concern is the use of the swimming pool. If the campers must be shuttled to another pool, that would have an impact on the budget; however, this information is not available at this time.

C. Stern questioned the Manager on the line item for postage and asked why postage is not allocated for different departments.

Mr. Broughton stated that postage for the entire Township is kept in one account and is maintained by the Purchasing Agent.

C. Honis questioned the possibility of using the wading pool at Harte Park; and questioned if we have any other locations to hold "Movie in the Park" events.

Ms. Crockett stated that Harte Park pool can be utilized; also stated that the band shell is clean, therefore "movies in the park" will not be a problem.

C. Parker inquired about the Fourth of July celebration.

Ms. Crockett confirmed that there should be no problem with the Fourth of July celebration.

C. Gussen stated that Council wants to make sure they are able to accommodate the residents with all of the services and programs.

Mr. Broughton gave an update on the progress in Votee Park; informed that he is working on a public information meeting for February where there will be several individuals present including our Health Official, a representative of GZA, as well as, someone from the State to answer any questions the residents may have concerning this matter.

C. Parker questioned why a meeting was going to be held in February when the final report was not going to be completed until March.

Mr. Broughton stated that he has been receiving many inquiries as to the safety issue regarding the Votee Park situation and feels it is necessary to address these concerns sooner than later.

Mayor Hameeduddin inquired whether the emergency generator is a natural gas generator.

Mr. Broughton stated that it was.

Mayor Hameeduddin asked about the gas line.

Mr. Broughton stated that it was an evaluation that would have to be studied further and then determined.

2. Fire Department

Township Manager William Broughton requested that we continue with the current authorized strength of the Fire Department which is 93 with two (2) civilians included in that number.

Mayor Hameeduddin asked about the three requested additions.

Mr. Broughton indicated that they are not additions, and this number will cover any retirements scheduled to occur in 2012; and informed that we currently have 91 firefighters.

DM. Gussen questioned whether or not the Township has been put on notice as to any near-future retirements.

Chief Verley stated that there are six firefighters who are eligible to retire as of May 1, 2012 - one has put in his paperwork and one is preparing to do so.

C. Honis inquired as to when a new hire would go into the academy and the costs associated with same.

C. Stern stated that the County does not charge for the training.

C. Honis asked about the Township's cost for background checks, etc.

Mr. Broughton stated that the costs will be approximately \$15,000.00.

C. Honis questioned the time span.

Chief Verley explained that some classes are scheduled during the year, and if there is a request for additional classes, they may be scheduled, as well.

Mayor Hameeduddin questioned if other towns used per diem firefighters.

Chief Verley explained that the towns in question do not use per diem firefighters.

DM. Gussen requested clarification regarding the number of firefighters that would be on the job if the Township hired dispatchers, alleviating the firefighters from dispatch duties.

Chief Verley explained that taking the four firefighters who are presently dispatching off the desk would add one additional firefighter per shift.

DM. Gussen inquired why there is still a need for three additional firefighters if the four who are on dispatch will be replaced with dispatchers.

Chief Verley stated that we are not in a position at this time to change the dispatch positions, in that there is still a need for training.

DM. Gussen still asked for clarification on the numbers for the fire department.

Mr. Broughton explained that it is necessary to maintain the amount of firefighters the Township has now so that we do not impact the viability of fire stations, and it will also help to alleviate overtime.

DM. Gussen, Chief Verley and Mr. Broughton continued to discuss the personnel breakdown of the Fire Department in relation to dispatch duties.

DM. Gussen requested that Chief Verley and Mr. Broughton devise a memo with better detail regarding overtime within the Fire Department.

C. Toffler commented on the authorized overtime situation within the Fire Department and questioned if the Township has the added number of firefighters.

Chief Verley explained when and why overtime would be utilized and stated that having the additional firefighters would decrease overtime hours incurred over the year.

C. Stern asked if the overtime budget is listed.

Mr. Broughton stated that the overtime budget was explained in his presentation; went on to say \$400,000 has been allotted for the year, and it was based on last year's overtime requirement.

DM. Gussen requested back-up for the overtime allotment.

3. Legal Services

Mr. Broughton explained the procedure for producing the legal services budget; informed that it was reviewed with the Township Attorney, the Tax Assessor and the CFO; gave a detailed explanation as to the legal charges, stating that any necessary changes were appropriately made regarding this budget.

DM. Gussen questioned the location of the wages for the public defender and the prosecutor.

Mr. Broughton explained the location of the salaries and wages for the public defender and the prosecutor.

DM. Gussen requested an account number breakdown for salary and wages based on positions.

C. Parker questioned if the \$400,000 of overtime was included in the firefighter line item.

Mr. Broughton confirmed this.

C. Parker feels that the overtime budget was a little inflated; does not feel that the overtime budget for this year should be based on last year's storm damage in that last year's situation was very unique.

Mr. Broughton stated that he feels it is necessary to allot for the overtime in the event of a problem.

Council requested the budget allotted for overtime be drilled down for clarification.

C. Stern inquired as to whether or not Councilmembers were receiving a raise.

Council will not be receiving a raise.

C. Parker questioned whether or not the prosecutor's salary has to be increased through a salary ordinance.

Mr. Broughton stated that it does not have to be done through a salary ordinance.

C. Gussen questioned several entities which do not exist anymore and questioned why they are not removed from the budget.

Mr. Broughton stated that the new software will produce the proposed new budget in a different, improved format.

Township Manager Broughton gave a detailed explanation of the legal budget.

ADJOURNMENT

DM. Gussen moved to adjourn at 8:35 p.m. Seconded by C. Honis and carried by the following vote:

In Favor: C. Parker, C. Stern, DM. Gussen, C. Honis, C. Toffler,
Mayor Hameeduddin.

Opposed: None.

Absent: C. Katz.