

BUDGET MEETING OF MARCH 20, 2012

Mayor Baratta called the meeting to order at 5:35 p.m.

PRESENT: Mayor Baratta, Deputy Mayors Cosgrove and Trawinski, Councilmembers Peluso and Swain.

ALSO PRESENT: Acting Manager Metzler, Municipal Clerk Kwasniewski, CFO Palermo and Attorney Mondello.

BUDGET OVERVIEW

BUDGET REVIEW

Acting Manager Metzler discussed a strategy instead of a budget plan with the Council. There have been repeated stories in The Record of towns that are proposing large budget increases due to the depletion of the surplus. He has always believed in a strong surplus plan. In this budget they are going to replenish the surplus. He thought they can maintain the services that the residents have come to expect. Fair Lawn could end up being a sole survivor if they have a strong surplus. As smaller communities deplete their surplus and are forced into shared services, Fair Lawn would be in a position to absorb some of those services. The revenue that the services would generate would help fund the amenities that the residents come to expect.

His responsibility as the Manager is to put together a budget that allows them to maintain those services. The budget before them represents a 1.04 percent increase over last year's budget. Cost savings that have been done over the last couple of years have helped offset increased appropriations. The budget represents no cuts in services with the exception of the reduction of hours and what will be furlough days in August at the Library. He pointed out that the Library is an autonomous board and while he recommends cuts to the Council they will make the final decision. The Library Board will apply those cuts accordingly.

Acting Manager Metzler pointed out that because there was no a tax increase last year the Cap Bank is 2% along with the Cap of 2%. The budget represents a 4% increase. The surplus has been the lowest since 2004, at which time the overall budget was \$10 million less than this year. The depletion of the surplus should be of concern.

The news is not all bad. The Third Party Ambulance Billing is going to generate new revenue this year. There is about \$900,000 of new revenue which will come in this year and go right to surplus. Those numbers are conservative.

Councilmember Swain questioned the new revenue of \$900,000. Acting Manager Metzler explained that \$169,623 is from the \$5.00 water fee based on three quarters of the year; \$250,000 from Third Party Ambulance Billing, \$200,000 in additional Court Revenue, \$200,000 from FEMA from the October storm and a couple of other miscellaneous accounts.

This is sustained revenue and will increase through 2013 and 2014. However, no capital surplus remains because it was used last year. He is anticipating using \$3 million of the surplus. He stressed that they have to come up with a way to replenish the surplus or Fair Lawn will be in the same position as the other towns. Deputy Mayor Trawinski said that increasing or maintaining surplus in proportion to the size of the budget is necessary if they want to maintain their triple A rating.

Acting Manager Metzler pointed out some good news. There is a slight uptick on replenished funds which is a direct result of positions that were vacant and not filled. Those positions that have not been filled have been cut out of this year's budget. In order to get to cap that they cut about \$660,000 primarily working with the Department Heads.

Acting Manager Metzler also pointed out that there is an increase in Health Care. Since they are self insured part of the money that is being generated this year is to replace the money in the fund.

CFO Palermo explained that she took the actual costs. The Borough paid out \$6.9 million for medical insurance. She increased that because adjustments had to be made for any new hires. Deputy Mayor Cosgrove wondered if there was additional revenue from the employees this year. CFO Palermo indicated there would be.

Acting Manager Metzler indicated that the Council needs to decide what direction that they want to go. He wondered if they wanted to develop a strategy where they will build surplus so that they could provide services to other towns. They could take the position that they will keep pushing this forward in hopes that the surplus is not depleted. He and CFO Palermo felt comfortable that this budget will generate some surplus. They both agree that the Borough should move forward with the strategy of having a very strong surplus.

CFO Palermo explained that they surplus should be anywhere between 15 and 20 percent of the budget which would be around \$8 million. They could continue with the services and continue with the triple A rating. She said the rating had just been raised to a triple A. In today's economy that is difficult to do. Fair Lawn is a star and they should budget to keep it that way.

Acting Manager Metzler said without any new generation the surplus would be \$2,249,927.

CFO Palermo went over the numbers. She explained there was a summary page of the main points with the budget, such as salary and wages and operational expenses. The grants are lower this year than last year. The impact on raising the grant money has no impact on the taxes. There is the capital improvement and the debt service, which went down. The deferred and statutory expenditures went up \$500,000. The reserve stayed the same.

Acting Manager Metzler stated that most of the department budgets are flat or lower than last year. Instead of doing line by line, they should ask their questions to the Department Heads and then review the capital projects.

Acting Manager Metzler commented that they maintain some capital projects. Many projects have been pushed off and his concern is that they are going to get into a period where all of a sudden they have an aging fleet and then there will be major expenses down the road.

Police Department – Chief Rose and Lt. Cauwels were present. Acting Manager Metzler explained the process to be followed.

Deputy Mayor Trawinski wanted to make sure there was enough money budgeted for ammunition for the range, training and the academy. Chief Rose said they couldn't do simunition training last year due to staffing. They still have last year's simunition.

Acting Manager Metzler approved the replacement of three vehicles. They will retire five vehicles, one of which is going to Africa. Councilmember Swain asked if there were improvements to the new vehicles with their gas mileage. Chief Rose said that part of what they were doing was getting a 6 cylinder car. According to their ratings, there is a nominal difference in the gas mileage. They chose the 6 cylinder primarily because they were a couple of thousand dollars less than the 8 cylinder. With some of the cars, they are trying to get two life cycles out of them. Ford is making new pursuit ready cars that he intends to look at. There is an option in one of them for an all wheel drive car. While he realizes this vehicle may cost more, it will be a long term vehicle. At this point in time, he has budgeted for a Dodge 6 cylinder. He has spoken to the towns that have hybrids and except for detective use, they fall short as a police vehicle and the maintenance costs more.

Acting Manager Metzler stated his vision was as they replace the old police cars, they would get rid of them. If they could get the legislation to pass a bill that would allow them to buy hybrid vehicles in the capital budget, they could

replace the old cruisers that the inspectors use and put them into the hybrids. He will continue to put pressure on the Senator so this can be accomplished.

Acting Manager Metzler stated that the Chief had requested four new hires but that money was cut to get under cap. He wanted the Council to know that they will not let the manpower get any lower than that. Frankly, as they move forward and see revenue increase in the Court, they can use that revenue and start building the force. Chief Rose said he is currently at 55 men and he does not have anyone that has announced their retirement. Based on experience, he felt someone out of the seven people eligible will retire. Deputy Mayor Trawinski felt that if Senator Sweeney's legislation goes through there will be a lot of retirements. He asked about the Salaries and Wages line is up. There is no increase in the operating. The only increase would be for the cars. Acting Manager Metzler said they will replace the older vehicles and put them in the Construction Department. Then auction the ones they have.

Deputy Mayor Trawinski said if there is a significant increase in the Municipal Court revenue they would need to revisit the staffing. The staffing is at bare minimum at this level. Chief Rose said they maintain minimum staff on all shifts and if necessary pay overtime to accomplish that. Deputy Mayor Trawinski said they experienced something like this back in 1996-1997, they thought by bringing the staffing down they would save money in the long run but in fact, the overtime went through the roof. They need to have this carefully monitored by the Manager, CFO Palermo and Chief Rose. He felt there was a potential for overtime to be significant. He asked Chief Rose if he had provided sufficient funding for the CALEA Certification. Chief Rose said he did by making simple adjustments. There is no fat on this budget. Deputy Mayor Trawinski said his concern was if they would be able to continue the certification. Chief Rose said they could do it.

Deputy Mayor Cosgrove questioned a line item if that was for another sergeant. Acting Manager Metzler said there was one sergeant position open. They held off on the promotion was to get through the budget process. They held up on these promotions just to make sure they have the money. Deputy Mayor Trawinski said that is another double edge sword because if someone brings another desk audit. Not having the appropriate number of defined supervisors in the long run causes the Borough difficulty in litigation.

Acting Manager Metzler stated during the budget process the Department Heads submitted 36 requests for promotions of which he approved three. It was made clear to the department heads that it is their responsibility to make sure their people are working within their Civil Service titles. He believed in some cases since they have not seen a salary increase in three years. The Department Heads wanted to do something for their staff.

Capital Budget – Chief Rose reviewed his requests such as replacing the radio communications room. – they put in \$550,000 but the Manager asked if they could tighten up that figure. They are trying to get a better idea of what the cost would be. Acting Manager Metzler stated that this project has been pushed to next year. He has reached out to the County and to central services about the possibility of a shared service. They are weighing the cost of the improvements that the Chief is proposing and the benefits of shared service. It is an ongoing process. Once they have identified the benefits and the costs associated with both, a presentation to the Council will take place.

Chief Rose stated there was one radio item that they do need. It is required because of the narrow banding requirement. The Police Department is done except for one Police repeater that is on the backup frequency which is used for EMS. This repeater is \$28,000 because it will not be compliant with the narrow band.

Chief Rose stated the servers are from 2007 and typical server life is three years. They were able to get an extended maintenance up to five years but cannot get it beyond that. Additionally, they are 32 bit computers and apparently the newer software has to have a 64 bit operating system. That is \$100,000 including the servers, software and the transition of the information that is on them.

CFO Palermo stated all that was allowed included was the furniture and the computer. All other items have been cut. Deputy Mayor Trawinski said they cannot get any more bare bones in that budget.

DPW- Superintendent Conte was present. Acting Manager Metzler explained how they were going to start with DPW Administration and the Mayor and Council will look it over, check their notes and if there are no questions, they will continue through his divisions.

Buildings and Grounds - Mayor Baratta asked about trailers. Superintendent Conte stated the trailers were for Memorial Park for the HVAC. Mayor Baratta wanted to know if the \$28,000 for the physical trailers. Superintendent Conte said this was for the servicing, maintenance and everything else. Councilmember Swain spoke about the chiller replacement. Superintendent Conte stated they spent a lot of money on HVAC repairs last year. Once the bid is awarded and the chiller goes in, most of the repairs will disappear. The new chiller will be under warranty.

Acting Manager Metzler explained that Contractual Services was reduced from \$30,000 to \$20,000 because they expect the maintenance to drop on it. He explained that department equipment was dropping from \$28,000 to \$25,000.

Shade Tree – Councilmember Swain wondered that the \$10,000 cut will impact the department. Superintendent Conte said the storm in October hit the Borough severely. Most of the trees that were dangerous were taken down in that storm. They have a problem in some areas with FEMA where an environmental question has come up. They are trying to work that out. Acting Manager Metzler said in regard to environmental concerns it is because some of the trees fell into brooks. Superintendent Conte said that he cannot bring equipment in and because of stream encroachment. Deputy Mayor Trawinski suggested talking to mosquito control. Superintendent Conte said he has already spoken to them but he still is required to get a stream encroachment permit from the DEP.

Electrical – There was nothing to discuss.

Maintenance Garage – Deputy Mayor Cosgrove wondered about the increase of \$7,000 for Contractual Service. Superintendent Conte stated last year the deductible was \$500. It is now \$2,500 for vehicles being repaired. CFO Palermo said this was something they had no control over. Deputy Mayor Trawinski wondered about removing the funds for the snow plowing parts. CFO Palermo stated it was double accounted for in the account.

Roads – Superintendent Conte said there was a salt purchase this year which they did not anticipate so there was a reduction of \$15,000. Mayor Baratta questioned another line item which Superintendent Conte explained that is the line item where the asphalt, stone and macadam are purchased. CFO Palermo stated they increased that because of the road conditions which were necessary. Superintendent Conte said the macadam went from \$65 a ton to \$85 a ton.

Recycling – Deputy Mayor Trawinski was recused. Superintendent Conte said they were paying someone for the compost site in the back but he is not charging anything this year so \$7,500 was eliminated. Superintendent Conte said they had 16 employees and are now down to 8. There are 4 seasonal, 3 in the back and one on disability. Mayor Baratta said the salary and wages have gone down in Recycling. She asked about the over-time. Superintendent Conte said that he has spoken to Acting Manager Metzler and CFO Palermo about restructuring Recycling. There was \$63,000 in over-time last year. They are putting a plan to eliminate overtime. As far as Recycling is concerned, they have been shopping around the different markets. They looked at a local vendor that was paying \$200 a ton for metal but a different vendor pays \$270 a gross ton which is 1,850 pounds instead of 2,000 pounds so there would be a savings of about \$5,000. They have made arrangements with Supreme Advanced the electronics person. Someone else will pay for the electronics which will bring in another \$8,000 a year. Every week he shops around for the

best price because of Recycling being a free market. Mayor Baratta wondered about the price of paper. DPW Superintendent Conte said he did not have the exact number of the amount for paper. The markets fluctuate.

Deputy Mayor Cosgrove asked about the plan for overtime hours. Superintendent Conte said there are about 9 employees; all of whom are Sanitation drivers. They talked about splitting the shifts and have one crew come in 7:00 to 3:30 and the other crew comes in 9:00 to 5:30. The crew that comes in later will be able to take the truck to market.

Councilmember Peluso asked what year it was that he had 16 employees in Recycling. Superintendent Conte said that was in 2008. Councilmember Peluso wondered if he has made any requests for additional full time personnel with this budget. Superintendent Conte said no they have been trying to make it up by shifting people around. With losing people and not replacing people, it is difficult, especially with the storms. Different departments are down so it is difficult to switch people around. Last year the seasonal employees did not start until August when they were here in April. They did help tremendously because of the storms. Fair Lawn was one of the communities that cleaned up quickly. CFO Palermo said there were weekly department head meetings where they were able to talk and share employees. It was a tremendous effort on the part of every department head.

Councilmember Swain wondered if the sanitation drivers could drive the mini bus and serve as a substitute driver. Acting Manager Metzler stated that all departments were working with a reduced workforce. Additional cuts in personnel will result in reduction of services. They are looking into sharing substitute drivers for the mini bus. Superintendent Conte stated that there were two employees with a bus driver license which would enable them to drive the mini bus. Deputy Mayor Cosgrove wondered about retired drivers from the Board of Education. Acting Manager Metzler stated that process has not been reliable in the past.

Sewers – Superintendent Conte stated that the budget for bioxide supplies was reduced by \$5,000 and Equipment Maintenance was increased by \$5,000. He increased Contractual Services and Special because of an increase in permit fees. CFO Palermo stated that every year she has to transfer funds into this division. She is trying to limit the number of transfers. The amount is more realistic.

Water – Superintendent Conte stated that this was essentially the same budget as last year.

Water Distribution – Increased by \$1,000.

Capital Budget – Superintendent Conte stated that he eliminated \$430,000 worth of equipment. A new garbage truck will replace a 1986 Mack truck. The packer body will be removed from the garbage truck and be replaced with a dump truck body at a cost of for \$65,000, giving the Road Department basically a brand new truck.

Sewer Pump Stations - Improvement to Sanitary Lines – With the elimination of house stoppages, residents are calling to say they need their sewer line replaced, which they did not foresee. He and Acting Manager Metzler discussed making the homeowner responsible to the main line not the curb, eliminating a lot of this cost. However there are utilities in the street that they do not want residents to go near.

Pump Station Rehabilitation – Pumps have to be replaced and repaired. He cannot do anything until the Capital budget comes through.

Acting Manager Metzler stated that Department Heads should be able to look at their Capital budget and see what their projects will be five years from now.

Mayor Baratta asked which pump stations would be rehabilitated. Superintendent Conte stated that all ten pump stations need work. Acting Manager Metzler stated that the budget had been increased to \$150,000 so that they could bring the pumps stations up to where they should be. Superintendent Conte noted that this was necessary due to the damage caused by the storms. They have also taken preventative steps to guard against damages in future storms.

Deputy Mayor Trawinski asked if the Council will be asked to fast track any items for capital expenditures, as it will be October before such bond ordinances are approved. CFO Palermo stated that she did not know where the calendar was with regards to the budget so there would be items that would need to be fast tracked.

Recreation and Parks – Superintendent Graff, Assistant Superintendent Homa and Supervisor Young were present.

Parks and Playground – Superintendent Graff stated that in the past they have borrowed two County hay wagons for the Memorial Day Parade, which had to be towed to Fair Lawn. He spoke to Ron Kistner, Director of County Parks and asked that the towing fee be removed. He was hopeful an arrangement could be worked out.

Recreation – Deputy Mayor Trawinski expressed concern that the budget was too tight.

Deputy Mayor Trawinski asked if any of the organizations in Line item 61 through 2070 submitted a financial statement or Form 990. Municipal Clerk Kwasniewski stated that she wrote each organization requesting this information when she was Manager, but no one responded. Deputy Mayor Trawinski suggesting making it a condition that financial information be submitted before approval is given. He stressed that he was not opposed to giving them money but wanted to know what the taxpayers were getting with the money given to these organizations. Mayor Baratta stated they did not want to give large sums of money to organizations that had other ways to raise funds or had a large surplus. On the other hand, it would help other organizations show why they needed the funds. Deputy Mayor Cosgrove did not think \$15,000 for All Sports was a lot of money, considering the multitude of programs they run.

There was consensus that letters be sent to the organizations requesting they submit a 990 form.

Celebration of Public Events – Acting Manager Metzler stated that funds for the cost of fireworks have been eliminated. The overtime to run the fireworks has not been eliminated. Councilmember Swain did not want cut the fireworks. Deputy Mayor Cosgrove stated that he will check with the Chamber of Commerce. He and Councilmember Peluso will be sending out a letter to all the businesses. Superintendent Graff stated that he would need to know whether or not to include the fireworks in the Borough Newsletter.

Acting Manager Metzler stated that they found an error in the DPW Budget of \$15,000. They can offset one against the other and hold the fireworks, although that does not negate the need for fund raising.

Superintendent Graff stated that he would like to schedule the fireworks on Monday, July 2nd with Thursday, July 5th and Sunday, July 8th as rain dates. Councilmember Peluso asked if overtime costs were increased by employees working on a Sunday. Superintendent Graff stated that it would only be time and a half.

There was a consensus on having the Fireworks on July 2nd with rain dates on July 5th and 8th.

Capital – Superintendent Graff stated that he had added a ball field machine costing \$12,500 into the capital budget and then removed it. It is beginning to need repairs so he must add it back.

Councilmember Swain asked how many fields would be covered by the lightening detectors. Assistant Superintendent Homa stated that the one detector will cover Dobrow Complex at a cost of \$10,000.

Engineering – Engineer Garrison was present.

Councilmember Swain asked Engineer Garrison how he was able to cut \$58,000 in professional services. Engineer Garrison explained that the line item was put in when they were going to try to get a person on staff.

Capital – Engineer Garrison stated that he did not want to fall behind in the roadway program. Six years ago the cost was \$75,000 - \$80,000 per mile; now it is \$275,000 per mile. He will be using some of the grant money they received for road resurfacing improvements to do bump outs on Broadway. He anticipates doing two miles for \$500,000. There is a potential for a significant cost increase. Engineer Garrison stated that the average ramp is ten square yards. It will now be 20 square yards of concrete because of the approaching ramps, slopes and landing areas that are needed. The bigger problem is that some corner radiuses do not have the right of way. Engineer Garrison explained that they had to have a three foot by three foot landing at a minimum to allow a wheelchair bound individual to make a turn. This will require property or easement acquisition in order to fulfill that requirement.

Councilmember Swain asked about the new telephone system. Engineer Garrison explained that the current phone system was installed in 1995 or 1996. The program is becoming difficult to operate and does not have capabilities to transfer calls to different places. Acting Manager Metzler stated that there are two independent systems between the Police Department and the Borough. This would combine both systems. Deputy Mayor Trawinski asked if the Police would allow that. Engineer Garrison confirmed they would.

Engineer Garrison stated the Council had to think about things that were going to happen to the properties they purchased. Deputy Mayor Trawinski stated that the Open Space committee recommended spending an additional \$100,000 to acquire three properties as opposed to two. Engineer Garrison stated that he was using this line item as a place holder in case they needed to do improvements at the Naugle House or George Street. Acting Manager Metzler clarified that it was not designated for a specific project. He was trying to think ahead.

Water - Capital

Engineer Garrison stated the standard improvements for well systems are replacing two to three wells per year, hydrant replacements, etc. He is

targeting the painting of the water tank this year as it has been in his capital budget for the last six years. The cost is \$1.3 million. The biggest problem is the containment in a residential area and blasting off lead-based paint.

Acting Manager Metzler stated that he looked into the suggestion that an American flag be painted on the side of the tower. The problem, however, is that the red pigment fades out and would need to be repainted every three to four years. Councilmember Swain asked if there was a color that had more longevity. Engineer Garrison stated that the aqua blues last the best. Deputy Mayor Trawinski did not think they should do advertising on the tower because there is bound to be a complaint no matter what company they went with. Deputy Mayor Cosgrove stated that if they could find a reputable company willing to pay the \$1.3 million painting cost he would allow a sponsor. Deputy Mayor Trawinski felt that they should at least explore that possibility of sponsors.

Engineer Garrison stated that he was going to forward the Council a resolution for the Engineering firm to do the specifications, since they inspected the tower in 2009. He wants to fast track this project as he wants the work to be done in the fall. Deputy Mayor Cosgrove stated that the contractors need to be reminded not to plug in a radio and unplug the repeater like last time, as they lost all radio communication.

Councilmember Peluso inquired about a \$250,000 increase in salary and wages in Water. CFO Palermo stated that was an increase in allocation not in employees.

Library – Director Murphy was present.

Deputy Mayor Trawinski asked if the employee contribution mandated by the State for healthcare insurance was included. He did not see it as a separate deduction. CFO Palermo advised that it was included.

Director Murphy stated that he anticipates the change in library hours to be permanent. Employees will be taking on new tasks they normally did not do to maintain productivity. Employees will now be working Sundays as part of their regular work week instead of receiving overtime compensation. Acting Manager Metzler stated that he and Director Murphy had previous budget discussions that covered layoffs, changing hours and closing more hours. It was the Library Board's decision to open less hours.

Councilmember Swain asked how much of a reduction was made. Mr. Murphy stated that the budget was \$15,000 less than last year and they absorbed an increase of \$140,000 in PERS and healthcare. They are keeping their materials budget as low as possible. They are borrowing more books through BUCCLS, a

number of which are electronic requests which are very labor intensive. He feels the plan is reasonable and will work.

Deputy Mayor Cosgrove asked what the overall perception over the reduction in Library hours by Library users. Mr. Murphy stated it is too soon to know because the change has not taken effect yet and has only been announced for a month. He does not like making the change but thinks it will be fine.

Acting Manager Metzler stated that there was rationale for keeping the Library open on Sunday because it was a big use day. He asked if any neighboring Libraries in the BUCCLS system were open Tuesday nights for residents to use. Mr. Murphy stated that both Paramus and Glen Rock were open. He was unsure about Saddle Brook and Elmwood Park. The residents' library card was good in any of the other 75 towns.

Councilmember Swain stated that she hoped the change was not a permanent cut in hours. She hoped to see changes so that they could go back to having their regular hours at some point.

Capital – Mr. Murphy stated that they would be replacing the lower roof first and the upper roof next. Acting Manager Metzler confirmed that the carpet damaged in the flooding was from level D. He noted that on the five year plan there was a request to replace that carpet in 2013. Since it was damaged during Hurricane Irene, he submitted a claim to the insurance company to see if they would cover that replacement.

Deputy Mayor Trawinski stated that he no intention of proposing further cuts. However, his rough calculation is that the State minimum funding was \$1.6 million dollars and they are appropriating \$2.2 million, which is \$608,000 in excess of their minimum requirement. This is the largest amount funded in excess of the minimum by a Council with the exception of one year in the last six. He asked CFO Palermo to confirm that data. CFO Palermo stated that she will.

Councilmember Peluso stated that the Library's budget presentation was very thorough in explaining employee salaries and expenditures. He would like to see similar detailed information for other departments. Mayor Baratta explained that the Library's information was different because they are autonomous. Acting Manager Metzler stated that the Department Heads had to submit very detailed budgets but they were not given to the Council.

Diane Trawinski, Board Trustee stated that she applauded the effort that was made on this budget by the Library.

Jerry Weiner, Board Trustee, thanked the Council for their support and cooperation. He thought this was the smoothest operation in the last ten years. From his perspective it was a pleasure to receive the literature and rationale so that they could rethink options, particularly the furlough days. He was pleased with the outcome.

CFO Palermo stated that the Library has gone online with the budget with the Borough's new accounting system. They are following the Borough's requirements for purchasing and are sharing in cooperative purchasing, which is important for cost savings. She complimented the Library staff for their efforts. Mr. Murphy stated that even though they are semi-autonomous they still are still part of the Fair Lawn team.

Municipal Clerk – Municipal Clerk Kwasniewski stated that Election ballots are now printed in Korean in addition to English and Spanish, which resulted in increased printing and mailing costs. She anticipates a 10-15% increase over the \$27,757.70 fee they were billed last year by the County. They can save in Legal and Advertising costs if fewer ordinances are done this year.

Deputy Mayor Cosgrove asked if the Borough will see a savings as a result of the School Board elections moving to November. Municipal Clerk Kwasniewski explained that the Board of Education will save about \$30,000 because they used to pay for the election and poll workers and had to reimburse the Borough for any overtime costs. Mayor Baratta asked if the Board of Education had to pay the poll workers for the November election. Municipal Clerk Kwasniewski explained that they would not. Mayor Baratta asked if the Borough will incur any extra costs as a result of this change. Municipal Clerk Kwasniewski did not think so because they are already doing everything required. There will be some additional printing costs to add the Board of Education candidates to the ballot.

Mayor Baratta asked if there was a time limit as to how long a voter could stay in the booth. Municipal Clerk Kwasniewski stated there was not. She hoped that people would read through their sample ballot in advance as voting will take longer with the inclusion of the School Board.

Capital – Municipal Clerk Kwasniewski stated that the Council had discussed switching to paperless meetings. The Councilmembers would need computer tablets which carried a monthly maintenance fee for hyper-linking and a scanner will also be required. Deputy Mayor Trawinski stated they were testing paper and paperless meetings at the next Freeholder meeting. They are contemplating offering advice service on the conversion from the County's IT Director. Municipal Clerk Kwasniewski stated that they may be able to start this program by the end of this year.

Tax Assessor – Tax Assessor Henderson was present. He advised that since some of the appeals were carried over from last year, he has some funds already encumbered so he was able to reduce this line item.

Capital – There were no requests.

Tax Collector – CFO Palermo stated that there is an increase in office equipment maintenance for software.

Capital – Tax Collector Lee had requested a computer, but funds were found in old ordinances to cover the cost.

Municipal Court – Court Administrator Cabibbo was present.

Acting Manager Metzler stated that no other Department Head has worked under such adverse conditions as Court Administrator Cabibbo, including having only minimal personnel. She has also contributed some outstanding ideas on how to operate the Court more efficiently and has employees working on swing shifts to reduce overtime.

Capital – There were no requests.

Health and Human Services – Health Officer Wagner was present.

Deputy Mayor Trawinski asked Health Officer Wagner about Meals on Wheels. She explained that they do the administrative work and coordinate the drivers' schedule. The drivers pick up the meals at Maple Glen and deliver them to up to 11 residents. She had to limit the delivery to an hour because many of their drivers work full time and use their lunch hour. They also purchase emergency meals that are distributed to the clients in case there is a snow storm and drivers cannot reach them. They occasionally have to replace the ice chest and cold/hot packs when they get worn. Otherwise the Meals on Wheels program is fully funded by the clients who pay for their meals. Currently they have eight to 11 clients.

Acting Manager Metzler stated that this was another department that had dealt with vacancies. Health Officer Wagner currently has two part time clerks; one is shared with OEM and the other with the Planning Board. Health Officer Wagner stated that this arrangement is working out well.

Acting Manager Metzler stated that Line Item 2051 contained \$50,000 for volunteer medical exams but the funds were moved to Volunteers Budget. The intent was to give all volunteers physicals, but only a small number are getting

physicals. Physicals for HazMet members are mandatory. Sufficient funds have been left in the line items for those physicals.

Social Services – Health Officer Wagner stated that the Miscellaneous Account is used to acknowledge their volunteers. Rather than have a luncheon at Borough Hall they will be giving one free ticket to each volunteer to see a show at the Community Center in April. The Council and Manager could be present prior to the show to acknowledge the volunteers. This will also help promote a Borough program.

Acting Manager Metzler stated that a question was raised earlier about using school bus drivers from the Board of Education as substitute drivers for the mini bus. Health Officer Wagner stated that she had tried this several times but it did not work out. The driver would have to drive the children to and from school, and work in the Borough for the short time span in between, but this would leave people stranded at various locations. Deputy Mayor Cosgrove asked about using a retired school bus driver as a substitute. Health Officer Wagner stated that they tried that as well, but the Board of Education pays a higher salary. They have someone with a CDL license that needs the passenger endorsement from the DMV, but the soonest appointment is in August.

Deputy Mayor Cosgrove suggested having signs made up that say “Mini Bus Stop”. Health Officer Wagner stated that the bus stops anywhere along the designated route. Acting Manager Metzler advised against that as they were looking at Glen Rock’s model that would not have a designated route. Residents call up and request a ride. They may also be able to switch to a van. Councilmember Swain noted that using a smaller vehicle would make more drivers available. Health Officer Wagner stated that the Saturday mini bus is well used, especially for people doing their food shopping.

Capital – A new mini bus was requested but it was not approved.

Finance – CFO Palermo stated there was an increase because they have a new accounting system. The other amount is for anticipated Audit Fees.

Capital – There were no requested items.

Manager – Mayor Baratta asked if Contractual Support was for computer maintenance. Acting Manager Metzler confirmed that it was. He reduced his Administration staff by one. The employee who previously served as his secretary is now shared by Finance and the Fire Department. The Assistant Purchasing Agent has also assumed the role of Manager’s secretary.

Deputy Mayor Cosgrove asked why License Fees were reduced. Acting Manager Metzler stated that was done because the Borough realized an actual reduction in fees.

Purchasing

CFO Palermo explained that the reduction in the line item for printing and stationary was due to the fact there were no more purchase orders, since everything is done online.

Community Center – There was no change.

Capital – There were no items.

Mayor and Council – Municipal Clerk Kwasniewski stated that Manager Metzler cut \$10,000 from Training Fees for Councilmembers, which covered the cost for the Council to attend the League of Municipalities Convention. Otherwise the budget is the same as last year.

Acting Manager Metzler stated that \$500 was added to Miscellaneous Expenditures for Boards budget for the ADA Committee.

Councilmember Swain questioned the \$30,000 amount under Settlement – Line Item 991. Municipal Clerk Kwasniewski thought it might be their share of the five year plan to pay back. CFO Palermo confirmed it was part of an employee legal settlement.

Building Department – Construction Official Kolano was present.

Construction – Acting Manager Metzler explained there is a clerk typist in Zoning who is currently working in the Police Department. They have budgeted for a replacement either with that employee returning and a new employee in the Police Department or vice versa. Construction Official Kolano would like to retain the current employee who is already trained. It would be difficult to train a new employee now as they are entering into their busy season.

Zoning Board of Adjustment – Construction Official Kolano stated that the line item was used for contractual services, professional services, legal services and advertising. The only other items were Office Supplies at \$700 and Training Costs that Assistant Zoning Officer Peck is required to take to maintain her license in land use.

Capital – There were no items.

Deputy Mayor Trawinski advised that the Open Space Committee sent out letters to the owners of the properties on the ROSI. They had five prospective sellers this time. Approximately \$400,000 from the Green Acres grant must be used this year. The funding left and the Open Space grant from Green Acres may enable them to acquire the white house next to the Naugle House and the two-family house on the northern end of the river walk by Lackland storage on River Road that floods. The Open Space Committee has recommended they acquire both of these sites but they are short about \$100,000.

Acting Manager Metzler wondered what the Council discussed with the residents who were flooded last year. Deputy Mayor Trawinski pointed out that those properties are not on the Open Space Inventory. They cannot use the Green Acres money for those properties. Acting Manager Metzler advised that he has a resident who calls on a fairly regular basis asking about the status of the funds and the purchase of his property.

Mayor Baratta indicated that the residents will not understand if the Borough purchases other properties and not theirs. Deputy Mayor Trawinski reiterated that the Borough will lose \$400,000.

Acting Manager Metzler noted that they could add additional properties to the Open Space Inventory. Deputy Mayor Trawinski noted that if Mrs. Vander Plaat sells her property to a developer the Council will get the same pressure to save that house as they did over the Naugle House.

Further discussion on this matter was deferred.

Budget Meeting Dates

The Council agreed to hold another Budget Meeting at 5:30 p.m. on April 3. The volunteer organizations will be invited to attend and then they can do the wrap up. CFO Palermo would like to introduce the budget on April 24.

Miscellaneous Public Comments

Howard Mark, 12-23 Ferry Heights suggested that they try using the mini bus in the same manner as Glen Rock for one day as an experiment. Acting Manager Metzler assured him that they are still looking into it. It would be a gradual switch. Councilmember Swain noted that if any changes are made they will make sure everyone is kept informed.

ADJOURNMENT:

Upon motion by Deputy Mayor Trawinski and a second by Councilmember Swain, the Budget Meeting was adjourned at 9:30 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Joanne M. Kwasniewski, RMC/CMC/MMC
Municipal Clerk

The undersigned have read and approve the foregoing minutes.

Mayor Jeanne Baratta

Deputy Mayor John Cosgrove

Councilman Kurt Peluso

Councilwoman Lisa Swain

Deputy Mayor Ed Trawinski