

## **BUDGET MEETING OF MARCH 25, 2008**

Mayor Weinstein called the meeting to order at 6:30 p.m.

**PRESENT:** Deputy Mayors Swain and Tedeschi, and Councilmembers Baratta and Trawinski

**ALSO PRESENT:** Manager Metzler, Municipal Clerk Kwasniewski and CFO Eccleston.

### **BUDGET DISCUSSION**

CFO Eccleston had prepared a sheet detailing proposed cuts. Mayor Weinstein indicated that he met with Manager Metzler and CFO Eccleston several times. He proposed cuts in the amount of \$151,000. He listed them as follows:

Mayor and Council – the elimination of additional secretarial services at a cost of \$15,000.

Police Department – not purchasing three police cars which total \$84,000 and delaying the hiring of the additional police officer until January for a total of \$18,000 and \$3,000 in health benefits. He proposed cutting overtime by \$9,500 and comp time by \$6,500.

Office of Emergency Management – eliminating \$39,800 for physicals.

Health Department – adding \$65,000 for physicals for all volunteers.

Parks and Playgrounds – cut \$3,000 from contractual services and add \$30,000 for the Community Center.

Capital Improvement – cut the stump cutter, the video system, the electronic sign and furniture.

The total of the cuts is \$150,950. He continued that \$500,000 would still be carried to surplus. CFO Eccleston would like to add \$300,000 to the insurance reserves. He proposed using more surplus to make up the cut in State aid. CFO Eccleston indicated he will shift the items eliminated from the capital budget into 2009.

Mayor Weinstein said they will be using more surplus but less than what CFO Eccleston recommends. The tax increase would be one point.

Councilmember Trawinski indicated he could support all of that except for the video system in the Police Department. Manager Metzler indicated that Chief Rose has said that it will have to be two-thirds in one year and one-third in the next year. The hardware and software is in Police Headquarters which is about one-third of the cost. The purchase of just the cameras this year

would be pointless and there is no sense in buying the software until the cameras are purchased. The Chief would like to have the \$65,000 this year so he can buy the hardware and put in some of the cameras into the cars and then next year finish the project.

Mayor Weinstein proposed delaying the whole project until next year. Deputy Mayor Tedeschi suggested they include it in the budget this year.

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It was agreed to cut the stump cutter. The Council agreed to add \$98,000 for the video system for the Police Department.

CFO Eccleston indicated that he plans to introduce the budget on April 8. If he gets a grant that offsets revenue he will add it since it will not have an impact on the tax rate. He reduced the wages in the Recreation Department budget and charged them directly to the dedicated by rider account.

Councilmember Trawinski indicated he would like to ask Manager Metzler to contact the Emergency Services to find out which volunteers can use their own health insurance. Manager Metzler wondered if the volunteers are getting the physicals on their own and being charged to their insurance company, can the Borough require the physicals and can the Borough require them to turn over the results of the visit. They are not obstacles that cannot be overcome but he must do some more research. These are legal issues that must be resolved.

Councilmember Trawinski stated that at some point he wanted to address the issue of the OEM Director returning to full time if there are funds saved. Mayor Weinstein stated he would like to start discussing next year's budget in May. He would like to see a monthly report on the overtime. They need to discuss the systemic cuts early. Manager Metzler indicated that he would be able to start the discussion on the cuts on June 1. CFO Eccleston indicated they would be able to indicate how certain changes could reduce next year's budget.

CFO Eccleston reiterated the cuts from his sheet and added that he will be reinstating the Police Department communication system to the capital budget and cutting the stump cutter and the furniture in the Municipal Clerk's office. The annual cost to the average homeowner was \$40.44 which is approximately one tax point. There was a unanimous consensus for the changes.

## **MISCELLANEOUS PUBLIC COMMENTS**

Lisa Yourman, 66 Nottingham Road commended the council for not taking their stipend. However, Mayor Weinstein advised her that they would be receiving the stipend.

Harvey Rubinstein, 28 Rutgers Terrace questioned whether the Council was cutting the furniture or just the line item in the budget. CFO Eccleston indicated that they cut the capital

line item for the furniture since it was already appropriated in another year. The furniture has been purchased.

Mr. Rubinstein wondered if they had budgeted funds to buy out the homeowners on 2<sup>nd</sup> Street. Mayor Weinstein indicated that was not budgeted. Those funds would be either from FEMA or the Open Space Fund although the grants are matching. They have budgeted \$400,000, \$450,000 and this year \$500,000 for open space generally. Manager Metzler indicated that there are strict guidelines that will be established by FEMA as to the value of the house. If FEMA agrees to a buy out, they will contribute 80 percent and the Borough will have to contribute 20 percent. The house will be torn down and the property could become the other

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end of the river walk. If FEMA does not fund it, the Borough could chose to acquire it as open space which would mean 50 percent from the grant from the State and 50 percent from the Open Space fund.

Sheryl Cashin, 1 Glenfair Road wanted to be sure that the study was included in the budget. Mayor Weinstein indicated that it was included.

Lisa Yourman, 66 Nottingham Road felt that since the interest rates are low they should refinance some of the debt. CFO Eccleston indicated that the highest bond rate is 4.58 percent and none of the bonds are callable.

**ADJOURNMENT:**

Upon motion by Councilmember Trawinski and second by Deputy Mayor Tedeschi the meeting was adjourned at 7:10 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

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

The undersigned have read and approve the foregoing minutes.

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Mayor Steven Weinstein

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Councilmember Jeanne Baratta

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Deputy Mayor Lisa Swain

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Deputy Mayor Joseph Tedeschi

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Councilmember Ed Trawinski