

Budget Workshop - February 20, 1999

Mayor Ganz declared a quorum at 9:05 a.m.

PRESENT: Mayor Ganz, Deputy Mayor Ahearn (9:15 a.m.), Councilmembers Dobrow (9:20), and Trawinski (9:10 a.m.).

ABSENT: Councilmember Tedeschi.

Also present: Manager Sacks, Municipal Clerk Kwasniewski and CFO Eccelston.

Mayor Ganz wondered if it was possible to reduce the appropriations for gasoline throughout the budget since the price of gasoline has dropped. CFO Eccelston indicated that he will prepare a summary and reduce the total.

Health and Human Services - Health Officer DePalma-Farr was present. Manager Sacks advised that there may be an opportunity to enter into an interlocal services agreement with Ridgewood and receive \$6,000 a year. Health Officer DePalma-Farr explained that Ridgewood currently has a contract with the County for health services which they would like to cancel. They are looking to have the 24-hour coverage mandated by law. They contract out for other services. Manager Sacks recommended providing the services. The Council thought it was a good idea.

Department of Public Works - Superintendent Davidson and Joe Maslo were present.

Buildings and Grounds - Superintendent Davidson thought there might be a 5 percent reduction in the cost of electricity later in the year as a result of deregulation. He also hopes to start saving on the lights with the energy conservation program. Mayor Ganz noted that there were increases in every department. CFO Eccelston will look at the figures to see how much it can be reduced. He explained that the increase in overtime was due to cleaning the rugs which is done on a cycle. Superintendent Davidson advised that bids will be taken for custodial services on Tuesday so it may be possible to adjust the figure in contractual services. It was agreed to reduce overtime to \$7300.

Shade Tree - Mayor Ganz wanted to be sure that contractual services contained sufficient funds to meet the Council's expectations in cleaning up the back log and wondered if it was more efficient to reduce overtime and increase contractual services. Superintendent Davidson advised that overtime is for storm damage and snow removal. He believes there he has requested sufficient funds to meet their needs. They are basically caught up with the backlog. Councilmember Trawinski wondered how \$95,000 was spent at the end of the year. CFO Eccelston advised that funds were transferred to get the backlog caught up and for two special projects, one on Lyncrest Avenue and the Willow tree. CFO Eccelston explained that he provides the same amount in overtime as was appropriated last year using the new rate. Mr. Maslo noted that they have already plowed twice this year.

The Council agreed to look at the overtime again at the end of the budget process to see if it should be increased.

Electrical Services - The Electrical Division handles all electrical emergencies around the clock.

DPW Administration - Mayor Ganz wanted to know if the telephone line item included a snow hot line. CFO Eccelston indicated that it did not but thought it would be possible to set up a separate line and just absorb the cost in the general budget. Superintendent Davidson noted that in an extreme storm they have used people in the past to interact with the present system. They have the capability of using other lines so they keep the outside line open for incoming calls. Mayor Ganz thought it would be efficient way to interact with the people during a storm.

Maintenance Garage - Mayor Ganz wanted to know why auto equipment maintenance had gone up 25 percent. Superintendent Davidson explained that besides actual repairs at the end of the year they refurbished some of the vehicles in an effort to extend their life. More work is being done in-house. It also includes snow damage to the equipment. He thought it might be possible to cut this line item as long as the weather stays the same. CFO Eccelston will review 1997 to see if there was anything unusual to see why that number was higher.

It was agreed to cut department supplies to \$3,000, auto equipment maintenance to \$40,000 and contractual services to \$85,000.

Road Repair and Maintenance - Mayor Ganz wondered why there is a 31 percent increase in overtime. CFO Eccelston explained that salaries are higher due to the settlement of the contracts. This is the main department handling snow removal so more money was added to the line item. CFO Eccelston presented a summary of overtime since 1991. Mayor Ganz asked for a graph and to include the budget amount for the significant departments and those that fluctuate. Contractual services includes snow help for such items as trucking out snow. CFO Eccelston noted that \$2300 is paid to Radburn Association for cutting and mowing of the islands on Plaza Road North. Councilmember Trawinski noted that Radburn Associates came to the Council two years ago and asked that the amount be increased which Council did not do. There was some discussion about expanding what Parks and Shade Tree do so they would take over that function or possibly outsourcing all of that cutting. He wondered if the Council should revisit it.

Superintendent Davidson advised that Parks does that cutting.

Recycling - Overtime is generated due to picking up recycling on Saturdays when there is a holiday during the week. Mayor Ganz asked for a real number for the clothing allowance although Manager Sacks explained that not everyone uses all of the show allowance. CFO Eccelston added that there are some items that are purchased that are not in the contract. Councilmember Trawinski wanted to know why Recycling exceeded its budget on overtime. CFO Eccelston will provide that information. Each department gets a monthly report on how the overtime is broken down to help them manage their overtime. Contractual services included the Millbrook landscaping fee. Councilmember Trawinski wondered if they were going to cart the leaves away if this is where they would budget additional funds. CFO Eccelston indicated he would create a separate line item in garbage and trash so they could track it. If there is a substantial cost to terminate that contract, there should be a separate line item for that as well. Councilmember Ahearn wondered about the increase in radio service. Superintendent Davidson advised they are paying an hourly fee for repairs. It was agreed to reduce that line item to \$500.

Sewer System - Department Supplies increased due to the cost of bioxide which fluctuates according to the weather. Superintendent Davidson noted that \$10,5000 of that line item was for the bioxide so he would not recommend reducing this item. Mayor Ganz suggested reducing the gasoline line item to \$3300 which is the amount used last year and then reduce it further by the reduction in the cost at the pump. It was agreed to reduce this line item as suggested.

Councilmember Trawinski suggested asking Ron Conte for an explanation of the appropriations for the line items for department supplies, department equipment maintenance and major repairs because he has an excellent handle on the condition of the facilities and perhaps some savings can be achieved.

Water Utility Generating - Mayor Ganz questioned the telephone line item. Engineer Garrison explained that every pump station and every well house has a telephone line in it to monitor the system. There will be some savings when the SCADA system is installed. Memorial Field wells will not need phone lines. Engineer Garrison was asked to give a realistic number to reduce this line item.

CFO Eccelston explained that all of the gasoline purchases are charged to this account and then it gets appropriated to the other departments so water is reimbursed. That number is a floating number. He thought it would be about \$7,000 for that department but because he has to pay for the whole municipality he needs this appropriation. He has used \$20,000 for the past 18 years.

Water Distribution - The expenses line item covers the permits to operate the system, on going education and the tax to the State the Borough has to pay as a water provider. Councilmember Trawinski thought the major repairs for this account and water generating could be reduced because nothing has been spent. CFO Eccelston pointed out that there needs to be one line item that can be used as a contingency for unexpected problems. He did not recommend cutting the water utility budget at all. There are too many unknowns. This is a self-contained utility. They were able to maintain the rates this year. Last year's budget was very tight and 1999 will also be very tight. There is only \$14,000 left in the budget and all the bills have not been paid. Engineer Garrison noted that all of the telemetry and controls will be replaced so he did not see any Y2K impact. Councilmember Trawinski suggested trimming \$26,000 from the budget and giving the taxpayers a rate reduction. Manager Sacks noted that since CFO Eccelston has said that the expenditures will be very close to the budget, the utility is not being over budgeted. She expressed concern about cutting the rate now and then having to compensate for that by raising the rate later which will give spikes which are bad. The consensus to reduce the water budget was not carried with only Councilmember Trawinski being in favor.

Engineering - Engineer Garrison explained that the overtime is mostly project work. Anything that is done on Planning Board matters gets charged to the escrow account.

Water Utility Operating - Engineer Garrison explained that the shifts had been rearranged to reduce overtime but then there was understaffing due to illness so not much savings were generated. They are trying to do more work in-house particularly with the water main looping projects. It is cheaper to pay overtime than to contract out. Superintendent Davidson added that there are some very old mains. Some of the lines were not dug very deep so that may be why there have been water main breaks due to fluctuation in the weather. Engineer Garrison noted that he thought the average age was 50. A number of breaks occurred because of the construction around them. CFO Eccelston noted that there is an elimination of one staff person in the salary line item. Councilmember Trawinski thought it was possible to reduce this item. CFO Eccelston reiterated that he would not recommend reducing the water utility budget. This budget is unique with other expenses being so tight so it is better to leave the funds in the salary line item. Councilmember Trawinski noted that it took five years to reduce the overtime figure. He thought it would creep up if the Council does not control it. He understood what CFO Eccelston was saying but he thought it could be reduced. Councilmember Dobrow suggested looking at this item again at the end of the budget process. Deputy Mayor Ahearn concurred.

Planning Board - The miscellaneous line item contains the cost of printing the land use booklets that are then sold. Mayor Ganz wanted to know the real cost to be sure that the fee charged for them covers the expense. Councilmember Trawinski asked for the list of the legal services which CFO Eccelston indicated he will provide. Deputy Mayor Ahearn questioned the professional services line item. CFO Eccelston advised that this is the line item that legal costs are charged to. Councilmember Trawinski thought they

average one litigation per year.

Creative Cable - Candace Vivino was present. Mayor Ganz thought using the video was informative. Ms. Vivino invited the Councilmembers to the studio to see the technology they have. It is important for them to keep up with changing technology. Mayor Ganz noted that she has asked for an increase in her salary and to have it reviewed again in June. Manager Sacks advised that if the Council intends to review something in the middle of the year, they need to have a budget contingency. Ms. Vivino thought by June they would know whether or not there are outside funding sources. If there is no sign of outside money coming in by June, she would have to decide whether or not to stay. She wants to develop a partnership with the Council to make this work. Mayor Ganz wanted to know if there was an opportunity to impose a user fee on each subscriber in addition to what they are paying that could be dedicated to Creative Cable. Manager Sacks noted that Borough Attorney Lustgarten would have to advise if that is legal.

Councilmember Trawinski noted that there is nothing in the budget for rewiring the Council chambers. Ms. Vivino explained that they have some of the cable. If they are running the cables for the security cameras, they can run that cable as well. She estimated it would cost about \$8,000. Mayor Ganz noted that Municipal Clerk Kwasniewski distributed a proposal for improving the audio system. Ms. Vivino also suggested that a line be run from the audio box to their room. Manager Sacks will ask the company doing the monitoring camera to see what the additional cost would be to run the cable for the Council chambers. Mayor Ganz noted they need to be certain that this is what the Council wants to do and also establish the rules. They need additional information before revisiting this matter at the end of the budget process. He asked Manager Sacks to coordinate the details.

Councilmember Trawinski noted that historically the Council has appropriated \$10,000 for new equipment, but that money has never been spent. He wanted to know if this appropriation would be spent. Ms. Vivino explained that the person who did all purchasing of the equipment left so it was not done. She could spend double her request for new equipment. They will need additional items if they are going to cable the Council chambers. Ms. Vivino indicated that they have made a commitment that they are going to go to 24 hour programming. They have not received a reply to Attorney Lustgarten's letter to Cablevision. Mayor Ganz asked Ms. Vivino to put her proposal in writing.

The consensus was to change the amount from \$10,000 to \$11,500.

Councilmember Trawinski thought it was appropriate to make sure that the School Board is involved in this process to some extent. Mayor Ganz advised that he had discussed this with the School Board. They need to wire one of their auditoriums which they are going to consider in their budget process.

Mayor Ganz suggested asking the grant firms if there are any funds available for Creative Cable. Manager Sacks will find out. The salary portion is still open since the Council is waiting to hear from the Borough Attorney. CFO Eccelston will get the exact number of subscribers.

Police - Acting Chief Marshall, Lieutenant Rose and Joe Cauwels were present. A memo was presented justifying the increase in their requested budget. CFO Eccelston explained the 47% increase in the overtime line item indicating that the salary increase is one part of it and there are eight new officers this year who will be in school for a major portion of this year so the overtime will increase to cover shifts. Councilmember Trawinski thought this was taken into account in last year's budget which would mean that this figure is too high. Manager Sacks suggested that CFO Eccelston and Acting Chief Marshall look at it again to see if it can be reduced.

New Equipment - Acting Chief Marshall explained that the increase is related to hiring eight new officers this year. Next year the amount will decrease but in 2004 11 new officers will be needed.

Vehicles - They have requested six cars although they really need seven. Councilmember Trawinski wondered with eight new officers if there will be the manpower to run them. He asked for a list of the vehicles to be replaced since it may be possible to transfer vehicles to other departments. Lieutenant Rose indicated that it was a bit difficult to predict which vehicles will be replaced since the fleet is deteriorating and the worst cars at that point will be replaced. Acting Chief Marshall assured the Council that they have the necessary manpower now. Manager Sacks indicated that her recommendation was for five cars so this line item would need to be increased. The consensus was to increase it to purchase six cars. CFO Eccelston will have to amend the temporary budget to allow the Police Department to order the police cars prior to the adoption of the budget. Mayor Ganz asked for the exact mileage and engine hours of the cars proposed to be replaced.

Training - Manager Sacks increased this line item because of the additional officers and there may be additional training sessions available. Councilmember Trawinski noted that this line item was increased last year and wondered why it was not spent.

Radio Services - Acting Chief Marshall noted that the repair bills had been quite high in the past years. The satellite repeater that was installed alleviated many of the problems so he does not expect that they will have the same problems as they had in 1996 and 1997. Deputy Mayor Ahearn volunteered to assist the Department.

Crossing Guards - CFO Eccelston advised that they received the same raise as the blue and white collar union. Their rate was

increased by \$1 an hour last year. Some municipalities have tried to hire crossing guards and give them summer responsibilities. Mayor Ganz suggested hiring them full time. Manager Sacks advised that there may be ways to shift the scheduling.

Contractual Services - Manager Sacks thought it would be possible to save money on all the maintenance and repair contracts they have for electronic equipment. Acting Chief Marshall noted it is expensive for their department because they need 24 hour seven days a week coverage.

Capital Budget - Acting Chief Marshall noted that since they will receive six new cars he thought the projection for the overhead light bars could be reduced. He will supply the numbers to CFO Eccelston.

Mayor Ganz questioned the figure for the animal pound construction. Acting Chief Marshall advised that he received that figure from a local contractor. CFO Eccelston will ask Engineer Garrison for a number.

Acting Chief Marshall noted that he proposed looking for a one acre site somewhere in the Borough in order to construct a new police station. Mayor Ganz was not necessarily prepared to support the whole project but he was prepared to hire a consultant to see where it makes the sense to build it. Acting Chief Marshall indicated that all he was looking for in 1999 was the consultant. The Police Department requires adequate space but they do not care where that space is located.

Councilmember Trawinski thought it was premature. It was the least important thing in the Buracker report. Accreditation was much more important and more beneficial to the residents. Acting Chief Marshall thought they would be remiss if they did not start now because this is a long term project. Deputy Mayor Ahearn would not consider a consultant unless the Department has a specific consultant in mind and he sees what they have done for other municipalities. He did not think the consulting reports done in the past were worth anything. Councilmember Dobrow wanted a report from the Department indicating what they hoped to gain with an additional building. She did not think they needed an outside consultant yet. Deputy Mayor Ahearn concurred. Mayor Ganz asked them to define the need and to explain why it is needed. Councilmember Trawinski suggested that if there are immediate space using the Auxiliary Police Building should be reconsidered.

Councilmember Trawinski noted that there had been no roll call or announcement of the Open Public Meetings Act statement. Municipal Clerk Kwasniewski advised that the meeting was published. They did not have a quorum when the meeting started. Mayor Ganz indicated it was up to him to determine that there was a quorum and he determined that there was one. He should have had the statement read as soon as a quorum was present.

ADJOURNMENT - Upon motion of and a second by Deputy Mayor Ahearn Councilmember Trawinski, the meeting was adjourned at 12:35 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Joanne M. Kwasniewski, RMC/CMC/AEE

Municipal Clerk