

February 27, 1999 - Budget Meeting

Mayor Ganz called the meeting to order at 9:15 a.m. Municipal Clerk Kwasniewski read the statement of compliance with the Open Public Meetings Act.

PRESENT: Mayor Ganz, Deputy Mayor Ahearn, Councilmembers Dobrow, Tedeschi and Trawinski.

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

Parks & Recreation - Superintendent Frey was present. Mayor Ganz enjoyed his presentation which was helpful. The main question is whether or not to open Walsh Pool this summer and to put in the basketball court as recommended by Superintendent Frey. Superintendent Frey noted that Columbia Heights Neighborhood Network has indicated that they would not mind if the pool is closed if it were enhanced as a park facility. Funds are in a capital ordinance for a basketball court. He thought the court could go where the pool is now and then fence off Harristown Road. Salaries for lifeguards, supervision and maintenance people amount to \$27,000. A dedicated well supplies the water. It costs \$800 a year for electricity to pump the water.

Councilmember Trawinski was prepared to consider closing Walsh Pool but wanted to look at it in the context with Memorial Pool. He thought Columbia Heights Network was looking for significant improvements that he thought would cost between \$500,000 and \$1,000,000. Manager Sacks advised that when she met with the Columbia Heights people they were dismayed that there is a tie between the two pools. They felt they were being delayed because no decision had been made on Memorial Pool. Councilmember Trawinski reminded the Council that the letter they received was not representative of the members of the Network or the residents of the neighborhood. Mayor Ganz noted that the number of people who used the pool last summer speaks for itself. Fewer than thirty people use it on a daily basis so justifying keeping that pool open is difficult. Manager Sacks noted that they want a nicer play area and a basketball court. They are the only neighborhood that does not have decent facilities where they can walk to; they have to drive.

Councilmember Tedeschi wanted to hear what the public has to say. He wondered how the basketball court will affect on parking which is inadequate now. Superintendent Frey thought the neighborhood children will walk. The out of towners will come in cars. A site plan needs to be done to decide the best location for the basketball court and the bike path. Manager Sacks suggested scheduling a public hearing in the next few weeks. Councilmember Tedeschi noted that the cost of Walsh Pool can be put in the budget and not spent or it can be spent to build the park. Superintendent Frey pointed out that a decision must be made early to mid April. He noted that there will be cost factors to closing the pool. Councilmember Tedeschi supported closing the pool, having public hearings and giving a year's notice so that the residents have warning that this is the last season.

A public hearing will be held as part of the regular Council meeting on March 23. Manager Sacks will notify people in the Columbia Heights neighborhood and will put a notice of the public hearing in the paper.

Overtime - CFO Eccelston noted that no allocation for overtime has been included in the budget for the 75th Anniversary. There was an additional \$40,000 for general expenses. He is developing a schedule showing actual overtime for 1998. Reallocating some overtime from other departments may be possible.

Gasoline - CFO Eccelston is reviewing the gasoline figures although he did not want to reduce the line item by more than the increase he had projected.

Senior Citizen Center - The program is growing so he had asked for an increase program materials. Manager Sacks cut that request by \$2500. She did not think the programs would be expanded that much to require the additional \$2500. She increased the line item from \$4000 to \$5000. Mayor Ganz asked what the cost would be to have the Senior Citizen Center was open on holidays. CFO Eccelston will provide that information to include salaries, mini bus and lunch.

Mayor Ganz did not think there was any justification to increase this item other than an expectation. If there are programs, he would agree. Deputy Mayor Ahearn wanted to see the programs that would be increased.

The consensus was to restore line item 561-20-62 to \$7500 with Deputy Mayor Ahearn dissenting and Mayor Ganz abstaining.

Special - This line item includes the reimbursement for the pool water. Councilmember Tedeschi thought the true cost for the reimbursement of water should be included. CFO Eccelston noted that the \$50,000 is just the amount allocated to reimburse the water utility. He thought it might be \$80,000. He will provide the real number.

Senior Citizens Clubs - Each club receives \$2400 for buses and the end of the year party.

Ice Hockey Association - CFO Eccelston advised that Superintendent Frey requested \$15,000 for ice time for the Hockey Association. Superintendent Frey explained that a group of parents has started a youth program for ice hockey. Parents are

charged a registration fee and they do fund raising. They would like the Borough to fund them the same as the Football Association and All Sports. There are 130 children in the program and about 2,000 children in All Sports.

Deputy Mayor Ahearn pointed that \$15,000 is the whole All Sport's budget. If there is a cultural shift in the sports children want to play, then maybe the Council needs to look at all the programs. He was not convinced that government can sponsor every sport just because it was expensive. Councilmember Trawinski wanted to understand what the parents contribute before he decides whether to include them in the budget. Mayor Ganz did not have a conceptual problem with supporting sports but he was not prepared to give the Hockey Parents the same amount as All Sports. Councilmember Tedeschi noted that ice hockey is a natural extension of roller hockey and the Borough is building an \$85,000 roller hockey rink. Councilmember Trawinski thought it was a legitimate request but wanted more information including what the parents contribute and he was not sure what the right amount should be. Superintendent Frey noted that Councilmember Dobrow was not sure that the Council should start something that will continue to increase in cost.

The consensus was to find a way to include the Ice Hockey Parents either in the existing budget with an equitable allocation or with an increase in the Recreation budget.

Celebration of Public Events - CFO Eccelston advised that he created a new line item for \$40,000 for the 75th Anniversary. It was agreed to invite John Cosgrove to a work session to give an update on the anticipated expenses and projected fund raising. CFO Eccelston advised that he included the same donation as last year to the non-profit organizations.

Capital - Superintendent Frey included the cost of a skateboarding facility. He proposed putting it in the tennis court at Berdan Grove used for roller hockey since there has not been a demand to put it back as a tennis court. The facility would be fenced and lit. Councilmember Trawinski wondered if the Football Building patio would qualify for a community development grant, but Councilmember Dobrow indicated that the area does not qualify any longer. The in line skating lighting project was deferred to next year. Councilmember Tedeschi asked if flooding it were possible. Superintendent Frey explained that the easiest way to do it would be to get a plastic tarp and then flood it if it is cold enough. Councilmember Tedeschi suggested bidding out the ice portion as an option.

Superintendent Frey advised that they would like to have the patio pavers by the refreshment stand. The Council felt that macadam should be used instead of the pavers. This project should be included with the bike path.

Library - Library Director Tim Murphy, Assistant Director Penny Kaplan, President of the Library Board Betty Schacher, Vince Sadowski, Phyllis Weglein, Freda Wettach and Vic Amato were present. Councilmember Trawinski recused himself.

Library Director Murphy asked for an increase in the book budget. He submitted a list of comments they have compiled from the survey they did during the summer of 1998. The need for books is on going and continuous. They have a number of fixed expenses. The Library is growing but their income is not. They had originally asked for \$10,000 for books and they would be grateful if that line item could be increased by that amount or any other amount.

Ms. Kaplan noted the NY Times is on film, hard copy and CD-rom for the last five years. This is a relatively new service. Mayor Ganz asked if they were devoting enough resources to electronic media to meet their user's needs. Ms. Kaplan replied that their membership with the Bergen County Cooperative Library System and the additional data bases through monies from the State Library gives them a variety of resources. Councilmember Tedeschi suggested that the Library might be a resource for the Senior Citizens Center for videos. He complimented them on their salary negotiations. He supported an increase in the budget for books. Deputy Mayor Ahearn asked for the impact of the cut in the audio visual category. Ms. Kaplan explained that category includes subscriptions to data bases that have been picked up from the State Library so it will have no impact on the amount of material available. Director Murphy advised that they have a grant application for \$15,000 for computer hardware from the State. Mayor Ganz suggested exploring grants with Capital Alternatives.

Capital - He explained his capital budget requests. Obtaining a Community Development grant to replace the library doors may be possible and there may be a rebate program from PSE&G for lighting.

The consensus was to restore the book budget to the amount originally requested.

Tax Assessor - Tax appeals are done by the Borough Attorney so there is no charge in that line item. The Assessor has some forms that need to be replaced so office supplies has increased. The Council wondered if reducing the contractual service line item was possible. CFO Eccelston explained that line item was for the expert witnesses in tax appeal cases. The timing of the Nabisco appeal will determine how much is needed in this line item. He will find out what has been spent on Nabisco and then the Council will revisit this item.

Tax Collector - Councilmember Tedeschi wanted to know if an additional person is going to be added. Manager Sacks advised that the part time person is going to continue with full time hours. CFO Eccelston noted that the person is still classified as part

time so is not receiving benefits. Manager Sacks indicated that will have to be changed for Civil Service. The net effect is that the Department is down a half person and it will not be filled. Deputy Mayor Ahearn wanted to know where the Y2K fix was appropriated. CFO Eccelston advised that any appropriation would be in the capital budget.

CFO Eccelston advised that he would also like to fast track the computer purchases as well as the road resurfacing and DPW Building. He also needs a decision on the minibus. If they are going to bid out the minibus, he has to fast track the gas pumping station.

ADJOURNMENT - Upon motion of and a second by Deputy Mayor Ahearn Councilmember Trawinski, the meeting was adjourned at 12:00 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Joanne M. Kwasniewski, RMC/CMC/AAE

Municipal Clerk