

APPROVED AS AMENDED: May 2, 2016

WEST WINDSOR TOWNSHIP COUNCIL

BUDGET WORK SESSION #5

March 9, 2016

CALL TO ORDER: President Geevers called the meeting to order at 7:00 p.m.

STATEMENT OF ADEQUATE NOTICE

This is to advise that the notice requirement provided for in the "Open Public Meetings Act" has been satisfied. Notice of this meeting was properly given and transmitted to The Times and Princeton Packet; filed with the Clerk of the Municipality; and posted in the West Windsor Township Municipal Building at North Post and Clarksville Roads on March 1, 2016.

ATTENDEES: President: Geevers; Vice President: Marathe; Council: Hamilton, Mendonez, Miller; Chief Financial Officer: Louth; Business Administrator: Schmid; Deputy Township Clerk: Huber

SALUTE TO THE FLAG

Ms. Huber led the salute to the flag.

PUBLIC COMMENT

Mr. John Church, 11 Princeton Place, noted that the salary and wage and benefits are the driving force of the budget and these topics have to be discussed in closed session. He suggested the possibility of layoffs to reduce this part of the budget. He recapped the budget and advised that as presented it is a 1.5 cent increase per \$100 assessed value, which for a house assessed at \$300,000 is about a \$26.00 per year increase in municipal taxes. Mr. Church requested that additional funds be placed in the capital budget for improvements to Canal Pointe Boulevard for this year.

President Geevers advised that funding will need to be re-appropriated from various capital accounts to fund this project.

Mr. David Wolfe, 1 Thorngate Court, thanked Ms. Geevers for responding to his e-mail and inquired about the timeline for the Canal Pointe Boulevard project.

President Geevers advised Mr. Wolfe that this will all be discussed at the Work Session on March 21, 2016. Discussion ensued as to the various steps that need to be taken to re-appropriate the funds as well as other steps that need to be taken to move the project forward.

Mr. Michael Tas, 17 Millbrook Drive, again noted his concerns about the condition of roadways throughout the Township and the need for the Township to keep these roadways in good condition. He inquired about the status of improvements to Meadow Road.

Ms. Schmid advised that the Township is working with the New Jersey Department of Transportation on coordinating the repair of their section of this roadway at the same time the Township does ours. She suggested that Mr. Tas reach out to the Department of Transportation to express his concerns about the condition of this roadway.

Mr. Melvin Benarde, 6 Thorngate Court, advised that the State of New Jersey has funds and why can't the Township receive some of these funds.

Ms. Schmid advised that the Township applies every year for grants for road repairs. She noted that there are 565 municipalities going for these funds. Ms. Schmid advised that the Township is currently waiting on two applications made to the State for improvement funds that were submitted in the fall of 2015.

BUDGET DISCUSSION

Legal/Litigation

President Geevers advised that she has spoken with Mr. Herbert and he advises that there is no need to increase his budget at this time.

Discussion ensued on whether or not there was still a need for additional fees for experts needed in the litigation budget and what was the proper way of requesting this information from the Township Attorney. It was noted that the funds would come from two accounts agreed upon at the March 7th Budget Session IV meeting.

National Night Out

Mr. Mendonez recommended reducing the line item for National Night Out from \$3,000.00 to \$1,500.00. He suggested that the Police work on getting more items donated.

After a brief discussion it was suggested that maybe the Township Council could help by reaching out to food trucks to be at this event. It was noted that both the PBA and the fire companies contributed funds to this event.

Utility Expenses

Mr. Mendonez suggested that on page 16 in the budget books under Administration line item 215 Utility Expenses reducing this line by \$7,000.00 to \$460,000.00 due to energy credits that the Township should receive from the new energy aggregation improvements made in 2015.

Discussion ensued over whether or not this is the appropriate time to reduce this line item due to not having a complete year of data to review. It was also noted that there is now the EMS building which is open twenty-four hours a day which needs to have data collected to see what the expenses will be.

Ms. Louth reminded Council members of why the budget is kept to similar levels year to year to avoid tax increases throughout the years.

Council members discussed reducing the gasoline line item an additional \$5,000.00.

Ms. Schmid expressed her concerns with cutting the gasoline budget because of unforeseen natural events such as heavy snow storms and hurricanes. She noted that when these types of events occur it puts our Public Works Department as well as other departments out in the elements 24/7 for several days at a time. Ms. Schmid advised that prudent budgeting is having enough resources available when such emergencies occur.

Questions were asked on how decreasing line items drastically could affect future years.

Mr. Marathe reviewed the changes proposed to clarify what is currently on the table.

Discussion continued on possible reductions to the budget.

Ms. Louth inquired if the changes from the March 7th budget session are still relevant.

Council advised that those changes are still on the table.

Discussion continued regarding possible reductions to the Planning Board litigation budget and health insurance costs in the 2016 budget.

Mr. Mendonez suggested increasing the ambulatory services by an additional \$7,000.00 to the 2015 level received for the third party billing.

Discussion ensued over the proposal to increase the revenue for ambulatory services.

Mr. Mendonez suggested increasing the Uniform Construction Code (UCC) fees to \$1.1 or \$1.2 million for the year.

Discussion ensued over the proposal to increase the UCC fees.

Mr. Marathe summarized the proposed changes before Council.

Council members discussed their viewpoints on the changes proposed to the 2016 budget.

Mr. Marathe presented his viewpoints on the budget process, health care costs, and road repairs. He reviewed his views on the proposed revenue and budget adjustments.

Members of Council discussed the increase in revenues. The consensus was as follows:

Uniform Construction Code Fees would increase by \$25,000.00 for a total of \$1,000,000.00.

Ambulatory Services would increase by \$7,000.00 for a total of \$387,000.00

Ms. Louth reminded Council members that the Township has seen a reduction in the fund balance for the past several years and she hopes that revenues in 2016 will be higher than anticipated to replenish the fund balance.

Members of Council discussed the operating budget changes. The consensus was as follows:

Gasoline budget will be reduced by \$5,000.00 for a total budget of \$280,000.00.

Affordable Housing operating budget will be reduced by \$5,000.00 for a total budget of \$201,400.00.

Electric/Natural Gas operating budget will be reduced by \$5,000.00 for a total budget of \$462,000.00.

Legal Services operating budget will be increased by \$10,000.00 for a total budget of \$280,000.00.

Ms. Louth reviewed the changes. She advised that the documents will be prepared and distributed to members of Council on March 18, 2016. She reviewed the budget process to include the COLA Ordinance, resolution for self-review, and the introduction of the 2016 Budget. Ms. Louth advised the public hearing for the budget will be on April 18, 2016.

Public Comment

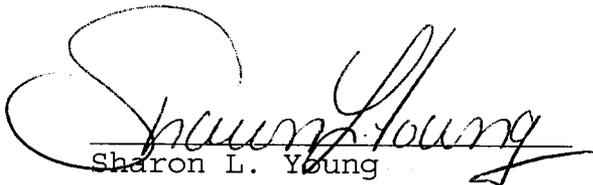
Mr. John Church, 11 Princeton Place, expressed his opinion that more could have been done to reduce the budget.

Ms. Miller expressed her opinion on the budget process. She advised that with regard to Affordable Housing the legislature needs to take a more active role.

ADJOURNMENT

Motion to adjourn: Miller
Second: Mendonez
VV: All approved

The meeting was adjourned at 9:15 p.m.



Sharon L. Young
Township Clerk
West Windsor Township