

APPROVED: April 16, 2012

WEST WINDSOR TOWNSHIP COUNCIL
BUDGET WORK SESSION #2
March 5, 2012

CALL TO ORDER: President Khanna called the meeting to order at 7 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 2, 2012.

ATTENDEES: President: Khanna; Vice President: Geevers; Council Members: Borek, Maher, Samonte; Business Administrator: Hary; Township Attorney: Herbert Jr. (left at 7:34 p.m.); Coordinator of Community Development: Ward (left at 8:30 p.m.); Township Engineer: Guzik (left at 8:30 p.m.); Township Clerk: Young

SALUTE TO THE FLAG

Ms. Young led the salute to the flag.

PUBLIC COMMENT

None.

BUDGET DISCUSSION

Department of Law

Mr. Herbert reviewed his 2011 accomplishments and his goals for 2012. He reviewed his fees for legal services and litigation fees. Mr. Herbert advised that Municipal Court fees have increased because of the changes in billing for the Public Defender and Prosecutor.

Mr. Hary advised that neither the Public Defender nor the Prosecutor receive benefits.

Mr. Maher asked if Mr. Herbert's office handles the changes to the Township zoning and inquired about zoning restrictions.

Mr. Herbert explained that his firm handles some of the zoning issues but the majority of the zoning changes are handled through another attorney and the Township Tax Assessor's office.

Ms. Geevers asked Administration for an analysis of each attorney's billing for 2011 and 2012. She advised that there is room for cost reductions. She noted that Zoning Board, Affordable Housing, and several other Board attorneys' bills are not listed under the "attorney's fees" in the municipal budget.

Ms. Geevers inquired about a breakdown of those legal fees. She also addressed questions about how the Planning Board's legal fees are generated, and how they are broken out separately from the legal work Mr. Muller provides for the Township.

Mr. Hary explained that Ms. Ward would be able to answer some of Ms. Geevers's questions including the increase of legal fees for Planning Board.

Community Development

Ms. Ward outlined the responsibilities of Community Development, and discussed each one of the Divisions' roles to include Code Enforcement, Engineering, and Planning and Zoning. She advised that the Department has received over 13 million dollars in grants since 1998. Ms. Ward reviewed the current projects for each Division and outlined the Capital budget requests.

Mr. Maher inquired about the Tree City USA designation and asked about the solar field project for Mercer County Community College. He also wanted to know how the Penn Lyle guardrail project was initiated and who approved the work. He asked to see the regulations mandating the placement of the guardrail.

Ms. Ward noted that the Tree City USA designation was an initiative through the Shade Tree Committee, and she had no input on the decision for MCCC solar field. Ms. Ward spoke about the need for the guardrail per DOT regulation and explained the reason for the design of the guardrail. She advised that the guardrail was paid for through grant funds.

Ms. Geevers explained that the Township does not receive revenue or reimbursement for inspections of County or school projects that are constructed within the Township. She suggested Council seek to have legislation changed regarding this matter.

Mr. Borek inquired about the fees charged under the Uniform Construction Code and whether a vehicle can be purchased with these fees.

Mr. Hary explained that the purchase of vehicles is done through the Municipal budget and they are not an item that is capitalized.

Ms. Ward noted that Code Enforcement's vehicles are shared with the Police Division because they have four-wheel drive.

Ms. Samonte asked what services are encompassed in "miscellaneous services" and inquired about various Capital projects.

Mr. Guzik explained that permit compliance for storm water discharge permits falls into the category of miscellaneous services.

Mr. Maher asked about the coordination of Capital projects with the Bicycle and Pedestrian Alliance.

Ms. Ward advised that the Alliance established priorities for projects in coordination with the Township's Boards, Committees, and volunteer associations.

Mr. Maher noted that it would be helpful to see the breakdown of what the rough costs are for the bike and pedestrian extension listed in the Capital budget.

Ms. Geevers asked how the funds are prioritized in the Capital budget between traffic signals and bike lanes.

Ms. Ward advised that priorities are evaluated by how they are warranted and the benefits they achieve. She noted that a four-wheel drive vehicle was deferred until 2013 and explained that hybrid vehicles are not as gas efficient because of the type of work they are used for. Ms. Ward also spoke about the use of "tough book" computers for the inspectors.

Mr. Maher inquired about the cost for computers and laptops. He wanted to understand what kind of computer the Township was ordering that would cost \$2,000.

Ms. Ward spoke about the Planning Board's increase in costs was associated with the creation of ordinances for the Transit Village, Berrien City and other areas of the Township.

Mr. Maher asked about the \$40,000 for landfill remediation for the compost facility.

Mr. Guzik explained that the cost was associated with DEP landfill closure applications and fees.

Ms. Samonte inquired about permit fees and the time it takes to get approval for the work.

Ms. Ward evaluated other Townships and found that West Windsor's fees are reasonable. She explained that a lot of the time that it takes to get approval is because the Township is waiting for the developer or contractor to get back to them with the changes that were required. Ms. Ward spoke about the time consumed in permit processing.

Council offered suggestions to keep the homeowners informed of the permit process.

Post Office and Municipal Building Update

Mr. Hary advised that the Post Office lease is due to expire in January of 2013. He noted that a proposed lease was received from the Postal Service with a 90-day out clause. Mr. Hary commented that he was still in negotiations.

Mr. Hary proposed subdividing the Post Office building so that it can be utilized by the Township. He advised that both the Municipal Building and the Post Office will need renovations, and plans will be created once the lease has been signed.

Mr. Maher spoke about using a portion of the proceeds from the sale of the liquor license and make some necessary reductions in the operating budget to achieve a zero percent municipal tax levy.

Mr. Hary strongly urged against the one-time use of revenues to reduce the municipal tax. He also advised that the Mayor is opposed to this philosophy because it does not promote good long-term financial planning.

Ms. Samonte inquired about the project expenditures for the renovations to the Municipal building.

Mr. Borek noted that he reached out to Congressman Holt's office who informed him that the Post Office has plans to relocate.

Ms. Geevers inquired about the status of reaching a tax rate for the Township.

Discussion ensued on the next steps to take in the budget process and how to utilize the funds received from the sale of the liquor license.

Office of the Township Clerk

Ms. Young outlined her role as Township Clerk and the core duties of the Office. She presented the 2011 achievements and the 2012 goals of the Township Clerk's office.

Ms. Samonte addressed a question regarding record retention and the use of technology for better record keeping and efficiency.

PUBLIC COMMENT

Mr. John Church, 11 Princeton Place, noted that the Clerk's office is very efficient. He also complimented the Code Enforcement Division on a job well done. Mr. Church spoke about fund balance and how reducing it would affect the Township's bond rating.

Ms. Alison Miller, 41 Windsor Drive, advised that there are discussions between Community Development and the Bicycle and Pedestrian Alliance to establish budget goals. She spoke about other issues including the use of the money received from the sale of the liquor licenses, which in the past was utilized for Capital projects.

Mr. Bob Akens, 32 Windsor Drive, wanted to know what the percentage increase in the tax rate will be. He also advised that a one-time use of revenue is often a red flag.

ADJOURNMENT

Motion to adjourn: Borek

Second: Geevers

VV: All approved

The meeting was adjourned at 9:50 p.m.

Sharon L. Young
Township Clerk
West Windsor Township