

APPROVED AS AMENDED: October 15, 2024

WEST WINDSOR TOWNSHIP COUNCIL  
BUDGET MEETING #1  
March 7, 2024

CALL TO ORDER: President GeEVERS called the meeting to order at 10:00 a.m.

ROLL CALL: Gawas (absent), GeEVERS, Mandel, Weiss, Whitfield

STATEMENT OF ADEQUATE NOTICE

Statement of Adequate Notice: February 25th, 2024 to The Times and February 23, 2024 to the Princeton Packet and posted on the Township web-site.

ATTENDEES: President: GeEVERS; Council: Gawas (absent), Mandel, Weiss, Whitfield; Business Administrator: Schmid; Special Assistant to Administration: Giammetta; Chief Financial Officer: Mauder; Township Clerk: Huber; Deputy Township Clerk: Sheehan

SALUTE TO THE FLAG

Ms. Huber led the salute to the flag.

Opening Remarks from Chief Financial Officer on the 2024 Budget

Mr. Mauder noted this is the first of three meetings on the 2024 Municipal Operating Budget and the 2024-2029 Capital Budget. He stated all salary and wages will be discussed in closed session. The total current fund budget is \$50,194,135.00, a 2.85% decrease from the prior year. Mr. Mauder noted there is a zero-property tax rate increase while maintaining a full-service community. He noted Administration is recommending the Cap Bank Ordinance for appropriations be approved this year. The Township is approximately \$700.00 under the appropriation cap with using the Cap Bank Ordinance. Mr. Mauder reported total salary and wages increased by \$1,037,401.00 and the total other expenses decreased by \$1,507,968.00. He stated the biggest reason for the decrease is because of grants awarded to the Township last year and the American Recovery Act of \$2.9 million. Mr. Mauder reported the amount to be raised or what is called the Tax Levy increased by 1.44% and the Township's total assess valuation also increased by 1.44%. He stated the budget was given to Council on February 27, 2024 and at the next Council meeting he is proposing an emergency temporary budget so

the Township can continue operations until the operating budget is approved. Mr. Mauder noted he is planning on a budget introduction for April 29th, 2024 and a budget hearing on May 28th, 2024.

Mr. Mauder reported the Township has applied for a Distractive Driving Crackdown Grant of \$7,000.00. He also noted the total energy tax receipts is going to increase by \$10,970.00. Mr. Mauder stated once he receives certification of State aid he will amend the budget for this amount.

Council Member Mandel asked for an overview of the various caps the Township had this year.

Mr. Mauder noted the Township will not be using any of the Levy Cap Bank which allows the Township to go 2% over on what is billed to the taxpayers so the Township will be able to carry that for two years. He reported this will be about \$5 million dollars over. He noted last year the Township had a \$900.00 balance when the budget was approved and this year the Township has about \$700.00.

#### Department of Health and Human Services

##### Division of Health

Ms. Swanson introduced herself as the Health Officer for the Division of Health. She reviewed the Division's accomplishments from 2023 and noted the Division provides services to three communities: West Windsor, Robbinsville and Hightstown. Ms. Swanson noted pandemic recovery was still a priority for the Department. She stated there were 24 mobile clinics conducted and 17 responses to outbreaks relating to COVID-19 as well as non-COVID-19 issues predominately affecting long-term care facilities, child care facilities and schools. Ms. Swanson reported the Department's food clinic campaign continued in 2023 and in partnership with local pharmacies the Department provided vaccinations to residents. She noted the Department covers the costs of uninsured individuals and new for 2024 the Department was able to sign up for a State and Federal program that provides COVID-19 and flu vaccinations to the Department to administer to uninsured and underinsured individuals in the community.

Ms. Swanson stated the Health Department conducts its own community health needs assessment and community health improvement plan by partnering with local hospitals. She noted the Health Department has operationalized electronic health messaging in three Municipal sites: the Municipal Building Lobby, the Senior Center and the Health and Recreation Building. She stated she is looking forward to a future electric sign for emergency messaging which will be installed this Spring outside of the Municipal Building. Ms. Swanson reported the Health Department Outreach Team has been busy in the community conducting approximately 188 health promotion and awareness activities. She reported they have continued providing essential public health services such as licensing and inspection of retail foods, public recreational bathing, septic systems, portable wells, animal facilities, rabies control, public health complaints, child lead exposures and child health clinics as well as pet licensing and vital statistics. Ms. Swanson expressed the importance of the Health Department's partnership with local schools and senior community. She stated the Health and Recreation Building is currently in the process of having an emergency generator installed that was partially funded by grants which will allow the Health Department to relocate the vaccine refrigerators and freezers from the Senior Center to the Health Department. Ms. Swanson anticipates a decrease in Federal and State grant funding available in the future. She reported the Health Department is currently working on improving its webpages as well as converting paper files to digital.

President Geever asked Ms. Swanson to clarify the line 'Enhancing Local Public Health Infrastructure' from her Grant Funding Summary.

Ms. Swanson provided examples of grant-funded uses such as funding staff, installing the new generator, as well as the new electronic sign and IT support.

Councilmember Mandel asked Ms. Swanson if she foresees a need for the Health Department to get involved in mental health issues in the future.

Ms. Swanson noted links to services and resources are directed on an individual basis. She stated at this time there is no

mental health professional in the Health Department but the Health Department is working on improving information on its webpages.

Ms. Swanson advised the Health Department is not proposing an increase in their budget and their budget is flat for 2024. Mr. Mauder advised the Health Department has no requests for any Capital items this year.

Councilmember Mandel inquired about the Lead Housing Program.

Ms. Swanson clarified no funds were expended in 2023 for this program and it is still being worked on. She noted there will be an ordinance for adoption this year that will allow the Health Department to move forward with the program.

Mr. Mauder stated funds were put into the budget to meet statutory requirements for implementing the Lead Safe Program but once the program is implemented and evaluated these funds may not need to be as high next year.

President Geever thanked Ms. Swanson for her hard work in keeping us all safe and healthy.

#### Division of Senior and Social Services

Ms. Ball introduced herself as the Manager of the Senior Center and Division of Senior and Social Services. She advised the Senior Center is open 8:00 a.m. to 4:00 p.m. Monday through Friday and offers programs for residents 55 years of age and older. She noted the Senior Center offers a welcoming environment and many various programs throughout the year. Ms. Ball noted virtual programs are continuing to be offered. She reported the Senior Center bus went in for maintenance in August of 2023 and, due to a part shortage, the Township received assistance from Mercer County with temporary use of a bus. Ms. Ball noted bus services resumed in February of 2024. She advised about 20 Seniors utilize the bus service and the demand is growing. Ms. Ball reported transportation is provided to the Senior Center on Mondays, Tuesdays, Wednesdays and Fridays and Spring and Summer are the most attended times of the year. She noted transportation is provided on Thursdays for grocery shopping.

Ms. Ball reported approximately 110 new residents became members of the Senior Center in 2023 and she anticipates this number to double for 2024. She noted virtual fitness and lecture programs have continued this year. Ms. Ball stated a community survey specific to each program is sent out to residents twice a year and quarterly newsletters and monthly calendars are also provided to residents via email, website and mail.

President Geever's inquired how many seniors take the bus daily.

Ms. Ball reported about 20 seniors, split between two bus times, attend the Senior Center daily.

Councilmember Weiss inquired if the Senior Center rooms will be made available to residents in the evenings.

Ms. Ball stated the Senior Center hours are currently 8:00 a.m. to 4:00 p.m. and any extension of hours would have to be approved by Administration.

Ms. Ball reported her budget is flat for 2024.

Councilmember Mandel inquired about the \$7,000.00 vehicle maintenance in the budget.

Mr. Mauder noted the plan is to repair the older Senior Center bus for use as a backup. He stated Mercer County is giving the Township a bus through Grant funds received and this will enable the Senior Center to have two buses available to provide transportation.

Mr. Mauder noted in the Senior Center's Capital Budget there is approximately \$68,000.00 in prior year funding for improvements if needed for the Senior Center.

Mr. Mauder reviewed the Capital requests as follows: Furniture \$5,000.00

Council President Geever's inquired if the cost for furniture could be taken from the Senior Center's budget for improvements.

Mr. Mauder explained that it could not be based on the useful life of the furniture due to bonding laws.

Mr. Mauder stated the Senior Center received approximately \$70,000.00 in Grant funds from Mercer County to be used for kitchen improvements, furniture replacement and IT improvements and the Township is currently in the process of getting these items approved by the County.

Councilmember Mandel asked if there are plans to use the kitchen for future food programs for the Seniors.

Mr. Mauder stated Ms. Ball would evaluate this once the improvements are made. He noted the kitchen is currently being used for vaccination storage until the generator is installed in the Health and Recreation Building.

Councilmember Weiss asked if the \$25,000.00 noted on page 4 of the budget for the Senior Center is the same as the \$25,000.00 noted on page 56 of the summary sheet.

Mr. Mauder responded this is the same amount and it is a standard practice that Administration requests a minimum of \$25,000.00 for each building for general improvements.

#### Department of Administration

##### Tax Assessment

Ms. Jones introduced herself as the Tax Assessor. She provided an overview of what the Tax Assessment Office does. Ms. Jones noted her office certifies the annual tax list. She reported the Township's total ratable base is approximately \$6.2 billion and it is her office's responsibility to apportion this equitably among all the taxable properties. Ms. Jones noted currently there are about 9,600 taxable line items. Ms. Jones stated she expects about 900 more with all of the anticipated new developments in the Township in the next few years. She reported on the following responsibilities of the Tax Assessment Office: maintaining the taxing list, monitoring the real estate market, reviewing and approving deductions for veterans, senior citizens and disabled people, tax appeals, added assessments, rollback assessments, assisting other municipal departments looking for property ownership information, fulfilling OPRA

requests throughout the year and answering general questions from the public.

Council President Geevers inquired about the valuation of taxes for residential properties and rentable properties.

Ms. Jones noted her office works to evaluate proper tax rates are collected and explained the reverse appeal process.

Ms. Jones stated the Tax Assessment Office's budget is flat with no proposed increases for 2024. She also noted she has no capital requests.

#### Tax Collector

Ms. Montecinos introduced herself as the Tax Collector. She noted her office's responsibilities include: collecting taxes four times annually, collecting sewer payments two times a year, preparing various State senior forms; issuing property tax reimbursements; answering public questions, as well as conducting an annual tax sale. Ms. Montecinos stated the tax collection rate for 2023 is 99.45%. She reviewed the collection process for both tax and sewer.

Mr. Mauder explained this year the Township is in communication with the County on when they plan to introduce and adopt their budget so as to keep with a standard billing cycle and avoid pushing tax bills to a later date like last year.

Ms. Montecinos noted the Tax Collector's Office has no ability to waive interest on delinquent taxes and sewer payments by State statute. She stated multiple communication reminders are sent out to residents and she encouraged residents to go to the Township website and sign up for the Tax Office's email blasts. Ms. Montecinos noted automatic debit payments are anticipated for the Fall.

Discussion ensued over the benefits of online debit payments and multiple ways to notify the public of the new option to pay online.

Buildings and Grounds/Information Technology

Mr. Aronson introduced himself as the Facilities Maintenance Manager for the Township and he introduced Mr. Joshi as the Network Engineer. He noted he oversees the Buildings and Grounds staff as well as supervise the Network and IT staff. Mr. Aronson reviewed the responsibilities of the Buildings and Grounds Division including upkeep of all Township facilities as well as compliance with all State regulations.

Mr. Aronson reviewed projects completed in 2023 which included: various Municipal network infrastructure upgrades; replacement of the entire Senior Center carpeting; demolition of the structure next to the community gardens; security upgrades at the Fire and EMS Facility; installation of the emergency generator at the Police Department; Police Department detective area renovations; installation of the emergency generator at the Health Department and electronic digital sign for the Health Department which are both currently ongoing; and the metal roof installation for the red barn at the historic Schenk Farmstead which is about 95% complete.

Mr. Aronson noted the roof replacement project for the Police Department went out to bid this year and bids received were over the allocated funding amount. He stated bids were rejected and he is requesting additional funds in this year's budget to complete this project.

Mr. Aronson noted his 2024 goals: to begin Microsoft computer upgrades and completion of current ongoing projects. He noted he is asking for funds in the 2024 capital budget for the following projects: an analysis of the fire protection sprinkler system at the Senior Center; the roof replacement project at the Fire & EMS Facility; the fire alarm replacement project at the Fire and EMS Facility, and a possible roof replacement project at the West Windsor Arts Center.

President Geevers asked if all the roof projects could go out to bid as one bid project.

Mr. Aronson noted the complexity of the roof projects and Ms. Schmid noted bids must comply with the local public contract laws.



Councilmember Mandel suggested considering solar panels with the roof projects.

Councilmember Weiss inquired if there are plans to make use of the garage bays at the Arts Council.

Mr. Aronson noted there was funding allocated in 2015 for \$50,000.00 for architectural design of the garage bays that the Council can decide to use in the future.

Discussion ensued about parking requirements for the Arts Council facility.

Mr. Aronson stated the Building and Grounds budget is flat for 2024 with a zero increase.

Mr. Mauder noted Mr. Aronson is responsible for the Information Technology line items under Administration and the budget is increasing by approximately \$60,000.00 this year mostly because of the annual subscription renewal and ipad support associated with SDL software.

Mr. Aronson explained the technology support needed to support the use of SDL software and anticipates costs such as with annual subscriptions to be expected each year.

President Geevers raised concerns about the heating units for the West Windsor Little League indoor batting cage facility. Mr. Mauder reported purchase orders have been issued for the repairs.

Councilmember Weiss asked about the potential use of automated services for the community. A brief discussion ensued about potential use of automated services for the community.

Mr. Aronson reviewed his capital requests as follows:

- Network Computer, Printer and Scanner Replacement Program - \$150,000.00
- Annual General Improvements - \$25,000.00
- General Improvement Fund Request for Health and Recreation Building - \$96,000.00
- Fire and Emergency Services Roof Replacement - \$325,000.00

- Security System Upgrade Projects to Various Municipal Buildings
- Police Department Roof Replacement Project
- Police Department Air Conditioning Project
- West Windsor Arts Council General Improvements - \$25,000.00
- West Windsor Arts Council Roof Replacement
- Senior Center Sprinkler System Analysis
- Historic Society General Improvements - \$25,000.00
- Princeton Junction Volunteer Fire Station Infrastructure Improvements

#### Clerk's Office

Ms. Huber introduced herself as the Township Clerk. She also introduced the Deputy Clerk, Allison Sheehan. Ms. Huber noted the Clerk's Office accomplishments of 2023: Moved Council meetings from the Senior Center back to the Municipal Building; cross-trained the Clerk's Office staff; worked with the Health Department to have documents scanned into the Laserfiche system; renewal and recertification of the Laserfiche system with the State of New Jersey Division of Archives and Records Management; annual renewals of taxi, limo, solicitor and liquor licenses as well as financial disclosures. Completed destruction of documents on three occasions; processed 864 OPRA requests; 25 Ordinances, 257 resolutions; and 149 contracts.

She noted the Clerk's Office continues to keep in contact with the codifier to keep the new ordinances codified and her office continues to work in coordination with Administration on Township matters as well as meet with the Council President and Vice President for Council meeting agendas.

Ms. Huber stated the Clerk's Office secretary, Ms. Godin, completed the Municipal Clerk courses and successfully passed the Registered Municipal Clerk Exam in October.

Ms. Huber noted the Reorganization and Inauguration meeting of the Township Council was moved to January 16, 2024 due to State Statute and Municipal Elections were successfully held in November for three Council seats. She reported the Clerk's Office worked with the Board of Elections on redistricting and

the Township website has been kept up to date with Election information.

Ms. Huber reported the Clerk's Office has no capital requests and her operating budget remains the same.

President Geever thanked Ms. Huber for all of her extraordinary work for the Township. She noted she appreciates the Clerk's Office staff and thanked Ms. Godin for her service as a member of the Air Force Reserve.

President Geever called for a motion to recess at 12:05 p.m. for a 30 minute lunch recess: Mandel  
Second: Weiss  
All: Ayes

Meeting resumed at 12:35 p.m.

Department of Community Development

Mr. Surtees introduced himself as the Township Land Use Manager and Zoning Officer. He gave an overview of his division's roles and responsibilities. He noted since 2018 the Land Use Office in conjunction with the Planning Board has been in the process of updating each of the elements of the Master Plan as well as re-reviewing the Zoning standards for Berrien City. Mr. Surtees noted his Planning Board budget has had a slight decrease this year and his Land Use budget has had a modest increase this year due to ongoing litigation costs. He noted the Zoning Board of Adjustment budget remains the same.

President Geever suggested there be some type of outreach to residents when a study of their area is being conducted prior to the item of business being put on a Planning Board agenda.

Mr. Surtees noted, as in the case of Dutch Neck, the public had opportunities to speak and interact with staff at three Planning Board meetings. He stated Planning Board meetings are the most appropriate forum for item discussions.

Mr. Surtees reported his only capital item is for the Street Tree Replacement Planting Program.  
Code Enforcement

Mr. Harris introduced himself as the Construction Code Official. He provided an overview of his office's roles and responsibilities. Mr. Harris reported his operating budget increased due to an increase in reviews and permits. He noted printing supply costs have increased as well as travel expenses and vehicle repairs.

#### Engineering Division

Mr. Guzik introduced himself as the Township Engineer and Director of Community Development. He provided an overview of his offices' roles and responsibilities. Mr. Guzik reported his Community Development budget is flat. He reported the Engineering budget as well as the Environmental Commission budget is also flat.

Councilmember Mandel inquired about the special supplement category in the Environmental Commission budget.

Mr. Guzik noted the special supplement category is for materials or supplies for projects done through the Environmental Commission.

Mr. Guzik provided an overview of capital budget projects including: digital tax map conversion; the Bikelane/Bikeway Extension Program; the annual Sidewalk Extension Program; the Crosswalk Improvement Program; Sidewalk Repair Program Street Trees Project; Emergency Road and Drainage Repair Program; Annual Road Improvement Program for the residential neighborhoods; the Conover Road Improvement Program which was just awarded a grant; Vaughn Drive Extension Program, Signage and Striping Improvements; Grover Mill Dam Inspection and Repairs; Meadow Road Improvements Phase 2, and the Wallace Road Bus Garage Remediation Project; Flood Abatement Program; Utility Maintenance and Improvement; Sewer Collection System and Pump Station Improvements, Watershed Improvement Program and Shade Tree Replacement; Emerald Ash Bore Management Program for Street Trees.

Mr. Mauder noted Mr. Dobromilsky was able close out the State grant for this program and the Township has been reimbursed the full grant amount.

Mr. Guzik noted plans for watershed and sewer mapping to be eventually digitized as well.

Councilmember Mandel requested Council be notified in the future when grant applications are rejected.

Mr. Guzik noted under the 2024 goals and objectives there are lists of projects that money has been allocated for and these projects are currently under design and have not gone out for bid. He stated the Cranbury Road sidewalks Phase 2B Project and the Dye Forest Park Project off Carlton Place is mostly completed.

Mr. Guzik reported there are currently two pending grants. He noted the Township was notified a grant was awarded for Washington Road Improvements however he is still waiting for notification on the Transit Village Grant.

President Geever's inquired on sidewalk extensions from Windsor Drive to Route 571 as well as from Clarksville Road into the Municipal Complex.

Mr. Guzik noted he will look into the request and Mr. Mauder noted the sidewalk into the Municipal Complex is being planned along with landscaping in that area. Mr. Guzik also reviewed the plans for the Cranberry Road sidewalk connection to the Trolley Line.

Councilmember Mandel inquired about \$20,000.00 put into last year's budget to review priority areas for crosswalk safety improvements.

Discussion ensued regarding the assessment of crosswalk safety improvements. Council requested a follow up list from Engineering of projects currently under design with proposed crosswalk safety improvements.

Discussion ensued on potential future reallocation of funds to address road maintenance.

Public Comment

Ms. Elane Couterman, 35 Arnold Drive, expressed her support for the West Windsor Arts Council and expansion of the garage bays for its use and also expressed her concern for the Art Council's lease renewal.

Ms. Aylin Green, 100 Rocktown Road, Lambertville, expressed her concern for the West Windsor Arts Council lease renewal.

Ms. Paomaja Ganapathy, 19 Glengarry Way, expressed her support for the West Windsor Arts Council in the community and asked everyone to attend the Art Walk.

Ms. Amber Henrie, 304 Cranbury Road, expressed her support for the West Windsor Arts Council. She stated her support for the expansion of the Cranbury Road sidewalk to the Trolley Line Trail. Ms. Henrie also expressed her support for crosswalk improvements at the intersection of Abbington Lane and Bennington Road as well as increased lighting along Rabbit Hill Road.

Ms. Anne Clifton, 18 Galston Drive, thanked Council for their support of crosswalk improvements.

At 2:19 p.m. Motion to extend the clock to 3:00 p.m.: Mandel  
Second: Gawas  
All: Aye

Closed Session-Personnel

Motion to go into Closed Session: Mandel  
Second: Gawas  
All: Ayes

Whereas, N.J.S.A. 10:4-12 allows for a Public Body to go into closed session during a Public Meeting, and

Whereas, the Township Council of West Windsor Township has deemed it necessary to go into closed session to discuss certain matters which are exempted from the public; and

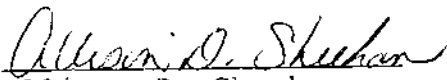
Whereas, the regular meeting of this Township Council will reconvene; and  
Whereas, the below stated subject matter shall be made available at such time as the issues discussed therein are resolved and its disclosure would not subvert any particular exception for convening a closed session.


Now, therefore, be it resolved that the Township Council of the Township of West Windsor will go into closed session for the following reason(s) as outlined in N.J.S.A. 10:4-12: For the discussion of personnel.

Meeting reconvened at 3:05 p.m.

Motion to Adjourn: Gawas  
Second: Whitfield  
All: Ayes

Meeting Adjourned at 3:07 p.m.

  
Allison D. Sheehan  
Township Clerk  
West Windsor Township

  
Linda Geever  
Council President  
West Windsor Township