

**RARITAN TOWNSHIP COMMITTEE SPECIAL MEETING
RARITAN TOWNSHIP MUNICIPAL BUILDING
THURSDAY, MARCH 9, 2017**

MEETING CALLED: Mayor Gilbert called the special meeting to order at 6:08 p.m.

ROLL CALL: The following were present: Comm. Richard Chen; Comm. Michael Mangin; Comm. Craig O'Brien; Comm. Lou Reiner; and Mayor Karen Gilbert.

ALSO PRESENT: Administrator, Donald Hutchins; Chief Financial Officer, William Pandos; Construction Code Official, Hans Warnebold; Police Chief, Glenn Tabasko; OEM Coordinator, Chris Phelan; and Fire Marshal, Thomas Abraham

MEETING ADVERTISED: Mayor Gilbert advised that the meeting was noticed on February 28, 2017 in accordance with the Open Public Meetings Act by providing notice to the Courier News, Star Ledger, Trenton Times, Express Times and Hunterdon County Democrat and was posted on the municipal bulletin board and the Township Website.

Committee Member O'Brien arrived at this time.

PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE & MOMENT OF SILENCE: Mayor Gilbert asked all to join in the Pledge of Allegiance to our Flag and to remain standing for a moment of silence to remember our men and women serving in the Armed Forces and in particular those serving in troubled areas around the world.

PUBLIC COMMENT: It is the policy of the Township Committee that all public comments on an issue shall be limited to three minutes per person. Public comment shall be permitted on items of concern regarding the agenda only. In addition, time will be allotted at the end of the meeting for public comment on any issue.

There was no public comment.

2018 BUDGET DISCUSSION – CONSTRUCTION, FIRE MARSHAL, POLICE, OEM

Police Department

Police Chief, Glenn Tabasko, presented the following requests:

*OE -

*increase due to vehicle lease costs

*\$3,400 for training

*Capital –

*Radios (\$8,500)

*(1) four-wheel drive vehicle replacement

*Gun replacements including holsters and sites

*Dry chemical suppression system for records department

Discussion was held regarding overtime. All concurred to budget \$15,000 for overtime.

Code Enforcement Department

Construction Official, Hans Warnebold, reported that in 2016 the department issued 3,000 permits, performed 9,000 inspections and brought in over \$1 million in permit fees. He continued that to date 358 permits have been issued and revenue is at approximately \$163,197.00.

Mr. Warnebold presented the following requests:

- * (1) additional full-time building inspector
- * make part-time plumbing subcode full-time
- * new vehicles
- * office furniture

Discussion was held regarding the number of vehicles requested; use of personal vehicles by department staff for inspections; lease vs. buy for vehicle purchases; office equipment and data processing; code updates; office furniture; and amount for car allowances.

At this time, Mayor Gilbert solicited public comment.

The following members of the public spoke during public comment.

“Robin” – urged the Committee to consider hiring additional employees for the Code Enforcement department to make it easier to do business in the Township. She commented, “it is widely known everywhere that Raritan is unfortunately the worst out of all of them...”

DJ Wright, a resident of 506 Clark Circle and owner of a funeral home located in the Township, praised the efforts of the construction department. Mr. Wright spoke of the impact on small business owners regarding the slow response for the issuance of permits.

Discussion continued.

Mayor Gilbert inquired about the anticipated 2017 revenue for the department. Mr. Warnebold estimated 2017 revenue at \$850,000.

Fire Prevention Department

Mayor Gilbert advised that it was brought to the Committee’s attention during the last Township Committee meeting that the State is requiring the Township to respond with a corrective action plan regarding the issues within the department. It was decided that such plan of action be discussed during this budget meeting.

Discussion was held regarding life-hazard use inspections; staffing; time for each inspection; gear and equipment; overtime compensation; fire prevention fees of other municipalities; the decrease in the number of false alarm occurrences; and fees for false alarms.

Chief Financial Officer, Bill Pandos, confirmed that \$29,000 was budgeted for PEOSHA in the 2017 temporary budget.

Mr. Abraham explained that the cost for gear per person is about \$4,000.00. He further explained that overtime costs are due to state mandates for certain after hour events such as fireworks at Healthquest or hospital events that can only take place after hours.

Mr. Hutchins spoke about the accumulation of compensatory time in both the fire prevention and construction departments. At this time, Mr. Hutchins advised that the estimated revenue for the construction department would be approximately \$978,000 not \$850,000 as previously stated.

Discussion was held regarding the cost of operation of other fire prevention departments and the determination of criteria including number of inspections, population, type and size of facility; type of inspection.

Office of Emergency Management

Chris Phelan, OEM Coordinator, provided a brief summary of the department's role and efforts and goals including:

Role/Efforts

- *provide additional resources and coordination with the County
- *response to large incidences, such as Jonas and flooding
- *preparation of emergency operations plan (3-year process)
- *preparation of hazardous mitigation plan, working with County OEM, State police (two-year process)
- *on-going mitigation efforts regarding an odor issue in the Township

Goals/Requests

*County rail emergency response – Mr. Phelan explained that the County had released the preliminary draft of such plan. He continued that the Township does have a significant rail presence relative to other municipalities. Mr. Phelan continued that the department is looking into the hazards that cross the rail lines including the type of traffic and potential for incidents relative to the Township's roadways and transportation in terms of truck traffic.

*Updating of shelter agreements – Mr. Phelan explained that the updating of agreements with the Township's shelter facilities such as JP Case Middle School is in process. He continued to speak of the critical importance of preparedness exercises in conjunction with the Prosecutor's Office and Law Enforcement in terms of emergency response plans.

- *Shelter and incident trailer

*Other community outreach on fixed facility distribution – regarding medication and vaccinations, in the event of a bio-hazard incident.

*Increased communication – Mr. Phelan reported that the department has increased its presence on Facebook and is looking to improve community outreach and provided a brief explanation of the Nixel emergency and community notification system – a combination of reverse 911, texting, email...

A brief discussion was held regarding improved community outreach and the marketing of such. Committee Members raised questions regarding the potential to coordinate with the County outreach program and use of the Township's mobile 311.

*Increased training opportunities

*Improve CERT team membership

*An additional salaried position

*(1) Defibrillator (\$2,500)

Mayor Gilbert announced the next budget discussion, Tuesday, March 14, 2017, 6:00 p.m.

ADJOURNMENT

Mayor Gilbert asked for a motion to adjourn.

Motion by Reiner second by Mangin

MOTION UNANIMOUSLY CARRIED

Meeting adjourned at 8:11 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,



Lisa Fania, RMC
Township Clerk