

**RARITAN TOWNSHIP COMMITTEE SPECIAL MEETING
RARITAN TOWNSHIP MUNICIPAL BUILDING
FRIDAY, MARCH 27, 2017**

MEETING CALLED: Mayor Gilbert called the special meeting to order at 6:01 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

MEETING ADVERTISED: Mayor Gilbert advised that the meeting was noticed on March 13, 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.

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

Township Administrator, Don Hutchins, recapped that the tax increase for the average assessed home valued at \$400,000 is \$6.61 per year or \$.45 per month. Chief Financial Officer, Bill Pandos concurred.

Mayor Gilbert summarized changes to the 2017 Municipal Budget based on the previously held discussion as follows:

- *removal of increase for the rescue squad
- *removal of the ambulance (rescue squad)
- *addition of half of the cost for the Hampton Corner Road flood study project

Mr. Pandos advised of the following additional changes: an increase in escrow administration and an increase in the anticipated amount from capital fund balance.

Mr. Pandos commented, "through calculations and analyses, I have looked at and anticipate conservatively, regeneration of the fund balance to \$2.3 million by December 31, 2017. I have also looked at the potential 2018 budget estimating a two-percent (2%) salary increase; step increases; the full cost of proposed 2017 new hires; pension and social security increase; and leaving health insurance flat."

A discussion was held amongst Committee Members regarding the amount of debt service; anticipated County and school taxes; the number of new hires for the construction department; clarification of anticipated revenue from the construction department; fire prevention staffing and fee schedule; paid OEM coordinator; accountability for expenditures by the rescue squad and fire company; offset of salaries from grant funding; amount of accumulated sick leave payout; surplus utilization; voting on school budgets; and the process for the cancellation of appropriations.

During the discussion, Mr. Hutchins advised that this year's budget is utilizing more surplus and that an \$850,000 bond payment is due. Mr. Hutchins also clarified that a full-time plumbing subcode official and inspector will be hired for the construction department. Mr. Pandos added that he estimated a two percent (2%) increase for County and school taxes; provided an explanation of appropriation cancellations; and gave a history of surplus balance as follows:

- *2013: \$1.6 million
- *2014: \$1.465 million
- *2015: almost \$2 million
- *2016: \$2.9 million
- *2017: estimated \$2.3 million

A majority of Committee Members expressed support for the proposed 2017 Municipal Budget. Mayor Gilbert announced that the 2017 Municipal Budget will be introduced at the April 4, 2017 meeting.

ADJOURNMENT

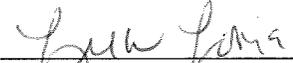
Mayor Gilbert asked for a motion to adjourn.

Motion by Mangin, seconded by Chen

MOTION UNANIMOUSLY CARRIED

Meeting adjourned at 6:53 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,



Lisa Fania, RMC
Township Clerk