

**RARITAN TOWNSHIP COMMITTEE SPECIAL MEETING
RARITAN TOWNSHIP MUNICIPAL BUILDING
MONDAY, MARCH 26, 2018**

MEETING CALLED: Mayor Mangin called the special meeting to order at 6:03 p.m.

ROLL CALL: The following were present: Mayor, Michael Mangin; Deputy Mayor, Karen Gilbert; Comm. Gary Hazard; Comm. Craig O'Brien (arrived at 6:21 p.m.); Comm. Louis Reiner

ALSO PRESENT: Administrator, Don Hutchins; Municipal Clerk, Lisa Fania; Police Captain, Kevin Donovan; Township Engineer, Antoine Hajjar; Chief Financial Officer, William Pandos; Public Works Superintendent, Brion Fleming

MEETING NOTICED: Mayor Mangin advised that the meeting was noticed in accordance with the Open Public Meetings Act, Chapter 231, P.L. 1975 March 22, 2018 with the Courier News and posted on the municipal bulletin board and the Township website.

PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE & MOMENT OF SILENCE: Mayor Mangin 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.

AMEND/APPROVE THE AGENDA

Mayor Mangin asked for a motion to approve the Agenda.
Motion by Gilbert, seconded by Reiner

ROLL CALL VOTE:

AYES: Gilbert, Hazard, Reiner, Mayor Mangin
NOES: None
ABSTAIN: None
ABSENT: O'Brien

2018 BUDGET DISCUSSION

Mayor Mangin began the discussion stating the following:

- *no additional full- or part-time employees
- *increase in operating budget due to group health insurance costs
- *addition of stipends

Mayor Mangin informed the Committee of a request for a \$10.00 per hour salary increase by certain legal professionals. Mayor Mangin commended and thanked Chief Financial Officer, Bill Pandos and Administrator, Don Hutchins for their efforts in preparing the proposed 2018 Municipal Budget.

Mr. Hutchins gave a brief summary that included the following:

*Revenue

- *\$220,000 from PILOT programs
- *\$130,000 increase in anticipated general revenue
- *Use of \$285,000 from capital fund balance
- *Assumption \$1.4 million use of current surplus
- *Budget gap of \$193,000
- *Approximate .67% tax increase

Mr. Hutchins provided an explanation of the increase in group health insurance costs; proposed stipends for the Chief Financial Officer for QPA certification, Assistant Tax Collector for Tax Collector Certification, Public Works Recycling Coordinator (funds from Recycling Trust), Assistant Engineer for IT support services, and Engineer for land surveyor/inspector certification. Mr. Hutchins also reported on a meeting with the Township Auditor, Bob Swisher of Suplee, Clooney and Company. Mr. Hutchins advised that Mr. Swisher is pleased with the proposed budget and that he will be attending the April 2, 2018 budget meeting to address any questions or concerns. Mr. Hutchins explained that the Township would not be receiving any funding from the County in 2018 to offset the debt service payment as it did in 2017.

Committee Member O'Brien joined the meeting at this time (6:21 p.m.).

During the discussion, Committee Members raised questions and concerns regarding the source of the \$130,000 increase to anticipated revenue; requests that did not get included; changes in services, if any; amount of stormwater management funds; amount budgeted for salt; salary increases; proposed tax increase for the average assessed home at \$400,000; and the impact of \$1.3 million vs. \$1.4 million surplus utilization to the average household.

Mr. Hutchins spoke briefly on surplus utilization advising that \$3.2 million of surplus exists and use of \$1.4 million is proposed. Committee Member Reiner suggested using an additional \$150,000 of surplus.

Mr. Pandos and Mr. Hutchins addressed inquiries raised advising that additional revenue was primarily from escrow administrative fees; that the only budget requests eliminated were those for additional personnel; and that the estimated tax increase per household is currently \$15.80.

Discussion continued regarding the request for a salary increase by attorneys. Mayor Mangin commented that such professionals have not had an increase in over ten (10) years. It was the consensus to deny the request for an increase at this time.

Mayor Mangin voiced support for the budget as is.

Deputy Mayor Gilbert spoke in favor of the budget as is.

Committee Member Hazard also supported the proposed budget and announced that he will not be present for the March 27, 2018 budget discussion.

At this time, Committee Member O'Brien requested review of the proposed 2018 municipal budget line by line, as done by past practice. Deputy Mayor Gilbert commented that review had been done different ways every year and advised that Mayor Mangin and she reviewed the budget independently then met with Mr. Pandos and Mr. Hutchins. Mayor Mangin reiterated that the Finance Committee (comprised of Deputy Mayor Gilbert and himself) had completed a line by line review.

Committee Members reviewed the following budget items:

- *Website upgrade
- *Legal services
- *Construction department personnel
- *Police Department personnel
- *Public Works personnel – road repair
- *Local Historians Committee budget
- *Utilities
- *Newsletter
- *Personnel/Wages

During the review, discussion was held regarding the hiring of an additional police officer and payout of sick time compensation for potential retirees of the department; the addition of \$18,000 for the salary of a third Public Works employee for road repair; budget request by Local Historians Committee; budget for gasoline; appropriation for the newsletter; and a request for a stipend for the Deputy OEM Coordinator.

It was the consensus to not hire an additional police officer; amend the Public Works salaries adding \$18,000 for the third part-time employee for road repair; carry discussion regarding the Local Historians Committee's budget to the next scheduled meeting; leave the amount budgeted for gasoline as is; appropriate \$5,000.00 for the newsletter under Streets and Roads; and include a \$2,500.00 stipend for the Deputy OEM Coordinator.

Next budget discussion scheduled for March 27, 2018.

PRIVILEGE OF THE FLOOR

The following members of the public spoke during public comment:

Peter McHale, a resident of 31 Hampton Corner Road, offered praise to Committee Members for their careful consideration of spending tax payer dollars; extended gratitude for the notification of the meeting with the County regarding the Hampton Corner Road project; and recapped health and safety concerns regarding the flooding issue with Hampton Corner Road and the urgency to correct the problem.

Glen Gould, a resident of 37 Hampton Corner Road and farmer, expressed concern for the future of the Hampton Corner Road area. Mr. Gould spoke of his background and experience as a retired scientist and offered assistance with the project. He also offered praise to the Committee for the conscientious effort in the budget preparation.

Dennis Loh, a resident of 29 Country Club Drive, voiced concern about the flooding at Hampton Corner Road. Mr. Loh advised the Committee that the situation is a life or death problem.

During Public Comment, Mayor Mangin advised that the permit for the Hampton Corner Road and bridge repair will be issued by the New Jersey Department of Environmental Protection (NJDEP). Mr. Hutchins clarified that funding for the study was appropriated last year. Mayor Mangin announced that a meeting has been scheduled with the NJDEP for April 11, 2018.

ADJOURNMENT

Mayor Mangin asked for a motion to adjourn the meeting.

Motion by Reiner, seconded by Gilbert

MOTION UNANIMOUSLY CARRIED

Meeting adjourned at 8:12 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,



Lisa Fania, RMC
Township Clerk