

**RARITAN TOWNSHIP COMMITTEE SPECIAL MEETING  
RARITAN TOWNSHIP MUNICIPAL BUILDING  
TUESDAY, MARCH 5, 2019**

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**MEETING CALLED:** Mayor Kuhl called the special meeting to order at 5:34 p.m.

**ROLL CALL:** The following were present: Mayor, Jeff Kuhl; Deputy Mayor, Louis Reiner; Comm. Karen Gilbert; Comm. Michael Mangin

**ABSENT:** Comm. Gary Hazard

**ALSO PRESENT:** Administrator, Don Hutchins; Municipal Clerk, Lisa Fania; Chief Financial Officer, Bill Pandos

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**MEETING NOTICED:** Mayor Kuhl advised that the meeting was noticed in accordance with the Open Public Meetings Act, Chapter 231, P.L. 1975 February 6, 2019 to the Courier News, Hunterdon County Democrat, Star Ledger, TapInto, Express Times and was posted on the municipal bulletin board and the Township website.

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**2019 BUDGET DISCUSSION**

Mr. Hutchins advised Committee Members that he spoke with Committee Member Hazard earlier in the day and that he voiced support for the proposed 2019 budget as is.

Mr. Hutchins and Mr. Pandos recapped the following 2019 budget assumptions:

- \*tax increase of 0.66, with the open space tax the increase is only 0.009
- \*annual tax increase of \$7.05 for the average assessed home

Discussion commenced about the possibility of lowering the tax rate even more; using an additional \$20,000 from surplus and the impact of such to the taxpayer; the possibility of looking at the police budget; preparation of an article to disseminate information regarding the 2019 tax rate to taxpayers; estimated tax bills; and salt supply.

During the discussion, Chief Financial Officer, Bill Pandos, voiced opposition to utilizing additional surplus. Mr. Hutchins added that the taxpayer would not even feel the effect of a \$20,000 budget reduction. Mayor Kuhl commented, "this seems to me to be a responsible budget for taking care of things we need to care of...."

Mr. Hutchins also advised that the Police O/E budget is already tight; that the size of a storm does not impact salt utilization; storm costs include overtime; and that salt supply is good. Mr. Hutchins also commented on past tax increases. Committee Member Gilbert clarified that budgets are approved by the entire Committee and not just the Mayor at that time.

A brief discussion continued regarding the content of a budget explanation that included the following:

- \*statement that this is a responsible budget, focused on getting things done that need to be done
- \*over \$2 million appropriated for roads
- \*on-time introduction
- \*changes in terms of bonding
- \*focus on what is important to the taxpayers

Mr. Hutchins further commented that depending on what is left in the operating budget towards the end of the year, future projects could include the replacement of half of the chairs in the court room.

Committee Members acknowledged and expressed gratitude to Mr. Hutchins and Mr. Pandos for their efforts in preparation of the 2019 Municipal Budget. It was the consensus of the Committee to proceed with the introduction of the 2019 Municipal Budget at the March 19, 2109 regular meeting.

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**PRIVILEGE OF THE FLOOR**

There was no public comment.

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**ADJOURNMENT**

Mayor Kuhl asked for a motion to adjourn the meeting.  
Motion by Gilbert, seconded by Reiner  
**MOTION UNANIMOUSLY CARRIED**

Meeting adjourned at 6:00 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

  
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Lisa Fania, RMC  
Township Clerk