

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

MEETING CALLED: Mayor Kuhl called the special meeting to order at 5:33 p.m.

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

ALSO PRESENT: Administrator, Don Hutchins; Municipal Clerk, Lisa Fania; Chief Financial Officer, Bill Pandos; Public Works Superintendent, Brion Fleming; Office of Emergency Management Coordinator, Chris Phelan; Deputy Chief, Raritan Township Fire Company, Keith Paradiso; former Fire Chief, Raritan Township Fire Company, Steve Wetter; Captain, Raritan Township Fire Company, Chris Wilt

MEETING NOTICED: Mayor Kuhl advised that the meeting was noticed in accordance with the Open Public Meetings Act, Chapter 231, P.L. 1975 January 21, 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.

2019 BUDGET DISCUSSION

Mr. Hutchins explained that tonight's discussion will focus on the 2019 Capital Budget.

Office of Emergency Management

Chris Phelan, Coordinator, Raritan Township Office of Emergency Management (OEM), presented 2019 Capital Budget requests that included the following:

*one (1) new four-wheel drive vehicle

Mr. Phelan presented Committee Members with a handout detailing 2018 highlights, accomplishments and 2019 goals for the department.

Mr. Phelan explained that the department is seeking to purchase a 2019 Tahoe Sports Utility Vehicle utilizing funds reimbursed through the Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA). Mr. Phelan reported that the Township received \$126,993.00 from FEMA in the fourth quarter of 2018 from Jonas. He continued that the 2018 quote for the proposed vehicle was \$38,000.00 and included the total fit-out.

Discussion was held regarding vehicle specifications and life-span; OEM vehicles coming out of service; potential for leasing; and additional needs of the department.

During the discussion, Mr. Phelan advised that the newest vehicle in the OEM fleet is about twelve years old, a Crown Victoria, that will likely be removed from service with the purchase of a new vehicle. Mr. Hutchins advised that a Sports Utility Vehicle cannot be leased it must be a capital purchase. He continued that the purchase will have no effect on the 2019 Municipal Budget as the funding will come from the Snow Trust. Mr. Pandos advised that there is \$131,040.00 currently in the Snow Trust.

Mr. Phelan expressed a desire for a town-wide messaging system. He reported that the department is able to utilize the County system to some level but is looking into Nixel or other comparable messaging systems. Mr. Phelan advised that the subscription for the Nixel system is approximately \$5,000.00 annually.

Fire Company

Keith Paradiso, Deputy Chief, Raritan Township Fire Company, explained that the Fire Company is seeking a five percent (5%) increase across the board.

Committee Members raised questions and concerns regarding the status of fundraising efforts; and the status of utility bills including percentage increases.

During the discussion, Mr. Paradiso explained that fundraising figures have steadily declined since 911 and that utility bills have steadily increased. Mr. Paradiso advised that the Fire Company is working on ways towards saving money including the elimination of phone and fax lines, installation of LED lighting and SMART thermostats. Mr. Paradiso did not have percentage increases regarding utility bills.

Steve Wetter, former Fire Chief, Raritan Township Fire Company, explained that the Fire Company is seeking a new apparatus to replace the existing 2003 Quint ladder truck. Mr. Wetter continued that the front-line emergency apparatus is frequently out of service with repair costs over the last ten years at approximately \$82,000.00 with two-thirds of the repairs occurring in the last four to five years. Mr. Wetter advised Committee Members that in accordance with NFPA standards the service life for an aerial apparatus is fifteen years to reserve status and retirement at twenty years and the Quint is currently at fifteen years of service.

Mr. Wetter also expressed safety concerns regarding fire suppression for the new multi-family dwelling developments in the Township. Mr. Wetter explained that the HealthQuest development is comprised of buildings four and a half stories tall and that the existing Quint cannot access the top of these buildings. He also informed Committee Members that the Tower ladder presents maneuverability issues within tighter spaces like the parking lots of these developments.

Chris Wilt, Captain, Raritan Township Fire Company, added that the current Quint has been out of service for a combined total of thirteen or fourteen months.

Mr. Paradiso further commented that obtaining reliable service for the apparatus is also an issue.

Committee Members raised questions and concerns regarding the cost of a new truck; lead time for completion; means of funding; capital plan for future apparatus replacement; and lease option.

During the discussion, Mr. Wetter advised that the cost is approximately \$1.1 million; that state contract pricing increases every July by three or four percent which would increase the 2018 quote another thirty or forty thousand dollars; and that there is some trade in value in the current truck. Mr. Wilt advised that completion could take about ten months.

Discussion continued regarding the bonding process and the possibility of discounts. Mr. Hutchins advised that the order cannot be placed unless the funding is available and spoke in favor of bonding. Committee Member Hazard spoke of the disadvantages of leasing.

Fire Company to advise on discounts if payments are made upfront based on the completion of sections of the apparatus, i.e. the Chassis and the ladder, as well as leasing options.

At the end of the discussion, Committee Member Mangin advised that a donation was presented to the fire company from residents in the vicinity of the Becks Boulevard fire.

Engineering/Planning/Zoning

Mr. Hutchins provided handouts for revised 2019 Capital Budget items for the Engineering/Planning/Zoning and Public Works departments. Mr. Hutchins reviewed the following amendments:

- *decrease in the overall capital budget from \$3.7 million to a little over \$2.2 million
- *removal of Hart Boulevard to 2020
- *addition of Concord Ridge Road
- *decreased engineering capital budget to \$1.3 million
- *removal of Belmont Court and Laurelton Trail from Engineering Capital to Public Works Capital
- *approximately \$52,000 for continued remediation at the Police Department
- *removal of heating units

Mr. Hutchins advised that Township Engineer, Tony Hajjar, has applied for a NJDOT grant for Case Boulevard, however, it will still be included in the bond ordinance. Mr. Hutchins continued to explain that the Township will receive notification regarding grant award sometime around April.

Mr. Hutchins reviewed additional roads in the proposed road reconstruction and maintenance schedule that included the following:

2019

Sunny Hills II

2020

Hart

Sun Ridge

2021

Bristol

2022

Manchester

Londonderry

Aberdeen

Devonshire

Mr. Hutchins added that the proposed schedule may be altered based on grant awards as the Township can apply for more than one grant with priority given to major thoroughfares first.

Committee Members raised questions and concerns regarding the likelihood of grant award; basis for schedule; consistency of proposed schedule with resident inquiries and requests; timeline for grant applications; and developer responsibility for road repair.

Public Works

Mr. Hutchins advised of the following proposed 2019 Public Works Capital Budget items:

Road Reconstruction and Maintenance

*Belmont Court and Laurelton Trail reclamation

Oil and Chip Seal

*Leffler Hill

*Old Croton

Mr. Hutchins advised that Harmony School and Bonetown roads also need to be done for oil and chip. Brion Fleming, Superintendent of Public Works, commented that a lot of the cost for Old Croton is due to stormwater regulations regarding retrofitting the inlets and bicycle-safe grates.

During the discussion, Mr. Hutchins addressed the inquiry regarding developer responsibility for damaged roads advising that they are only responsible for road repair if they cause damage but not for overuse.

Police Parking Lot Remediation

Mr. Hutchins advised that remediation is still ongoing and the estimated cost for completion is approximately \$100,000 for which \$52,000 will need to be bonded, as there is some original funding remaining.

Mr. Hutchins advised that the heating unit replacements have been removed from the proposed Capital budget. He continued to explain that the vendor, that did the Township's retrofits approximately ten years ago, provided a cost of \$66,000 for a complete retrofit of interior and exterior lighting, with the exception of some outdoor lighting, to LED lighting; and a retrofit of all of the heating units at the Police Department, Public Works and boilers at the Municipal Building. He further added that the cost includes a seventy percent (70%) state rebate, resulting in a savings to the Township of \$144,000. Mr. Hutchins and Mr. Pandos to advise regarding the funding of the \$66,000.

Discussion was held regarding the budget meeting schedule. Mr. Hutchins proposed a budget introduction the second meeting in March. He advised that the State has extended introduction to March 27. Committee Member Gilbert asked if getting the budget done on time is a Best Practices question. Mr. Pandos advised that it is.

Next budget meeting February 19, 2019 at 5:30 p.m.

PRIVILEGE OF THE FLOOR

The following members of the public spoke during public comment:

Angela Franco, a resident of 41 Manchester Road, thanked the Committee for the education regarding the budget process; spoke of the poor condition of Manchester Road; expressed safety concerns; and requested the road be advanced on the schedule. Ms. Franco also advised of the submission of photos depicting condition of the road. Ms. Franco also spoke on behalf of Sara Catedra, a resident of 13 Manchester, relaying Ms. Catedra's concern of the accessibility of emergency services vehicles to residents due to the poor road conditions.

Donna Foran, a resident of 23 Manchester Road, commented that the road has been falling apart for the last three or four years and asked that the record reflect the request to have it pushed up on the schedule.

PRIVILEGE OF THE FLOOR (CONT.)

Allen Fishman, a resident of 7 Manchester Road, commented on the poor condition of the road; snow being pushed into the driveways during removal; and the poor design of the driveway aprons.

During Public Comment, Brion Fleming, Superintendent of Public Works, advised that Public Works has been patching on Manchester and that the snow cannot be pushed into oncoming traffic but must be pushed to the side of the lane that the truck is in. Mayor Kuhl commented on the possibility of reviewing the road design from an engineering standpoint.

Residents of Manchester Road were advised to submit additional photos to the Clerk.

ADJOURNMENT

Mayor Kuhl asked for a motion to adjourn the meeting.

Motion by Reiner, seconded by Hazard

MOTION UNANIMOUSLY CARRIED

Meeting adjourned at 6:48 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,



Lisa Fania, RMC
Township Clerk