RARITAN TOWNSHIP COMMITTEE SPECIAL MEETING
RARITAN TOWNSHIP MUNICIPAL BUILDING
TUESDAY, FEBRUARY 19, 2019

MEETING CALLED: Mayor Kuhl called the special meeting to order at 5:30 p.m.

ROLL CALL: The following were present: Mayor, Jeff Kuhl; Deputy Mayor, Louis Reiner; Comm. Karen Gilbert; Comm. Gary Hazard (arrived at 5:31 p.m.); Comm. Michael Mangin

ABSENT: None

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.

2019 BUDGET DISCUSSION

Mr. Hutchins explained that the purpose of tonight's discussion was to come to a consensus on the following 2019 Municipal Budget requests:

*DPW personnel
*Engineering personnel
*OEM vehicle
*Fire Company request for a five percent (5%) overall increase
*New fire truck
*2019 Capital items
Remediation at the Police Department
Balance of the HVAC

Office of Emergency Management (OEM)

Discussion commenced regarding the purchase of a new OEM vehicle.

Committee Members raised questions and concerns regarding the possibility of utilizing a newer police vehicle; retrofitting with existing radios; delaying the purchase until next year; cost; and grant funding availability.

During the discussion, Mr. Hutchins advised that the police department is turning out their worst cars and keeping the sports utility vehicles (SUVs) and continued to explain that OEM needs an SUV. Mr. Hutchins further explained that the total cost of the vehicle is about $40,000 including fit-out and that there is approximately $136,000 in grant funding available. He also advised that any additional items would be funded through the OEM operating budget.

Committee Member Mangin reiterated that the funding is coming from the reimbursement from the Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA) and will not impact the 2019 Municipal Budget.

Committee Member Gilbert commented, "OEM asks us for very little. And we give them even less. Whenever we have had anything going on, they are the first there and last to leave. They keep us informed. The fact that they are driving around in a vehicle that sounds like it is unsafe and does not do them a whole lot of good if they can't get out in bad conditions..... This is a no brainer to me."

It was the consensus of Committee Members to authorize a new vehicle for OEM.

Department of Public Works

Discussion commenced regarding the request for three full-time employees.

Committee Members raised questions and concerns regarding alternatives including two full-time; one full-time and three part-time; one full-time and two part-time; impact to budget regarding salary/benefit costs; and possible retirements.

Mayor Kuhl solicited comments.

Deputy Mayor Reiner spoke in favor of two full-time employees.

Committee Member Hazard concurred.

Committee Member Mangin expressed support for two full-time employees.

Committee Member Gilbert spoke in favor as well.

Mayor Kuhl also concurred.

It was the consensus for two full-time employees.

Engineering

Discussion commenced regarding the request for one part-time employee.

Mr. Pandos advised that the cost of the additional staff member would be approximately $25,000 but would be offset by escrow.

Committee Member Hazard recapped from the previous budget discussion that the request for a part-time employee was to complete the digitizing of files for utilization with the SDL system and reduce time spent on fulfilling OPRA requests.

It was the consensus to authorize one part-time employee with status updates throughout the year regarding the digitizing project and possible termination of employment upon completion of the task.

Fire Company

Discussion commenced regarding the Fire Company's request for an overall five percent (5%) increase of approximately $8,500.

During the discussion, Mr. Hutchins recapped that the request is for five percent (5%) of $124,000 (operating) and five percent (5%) of $40,000 (capital). Committee Member Gilbert explained that it had been awhile since the Township had given the Fire Company an increase and that $5,000 was taken away last year.

Mayor Kuhl suggested a total of $4,000.

Committee Member Gilbert suggested $5,000, $2,000 for capital and the remaining $3,000 for the operating budget.

A brief discussion was held regarding the distribution of the $5,000. Committee Member Mangin commented that the Fire Company is losing about $3,000 annually from its fund drive. Committee Member Gilbert added that the Fire Company had also advised on increasing utility costs.

It was the consensus to authorize a total of $5,000 -- $2,000 (capital) and $3,000 (operating).

2019 Capital

Mr. Hutchins recapped the following amendments to the 2019 Capital Budget discussed during the previous budget meeting:

*$53,000 for remediation at the police department
*$67,000 for the HVAC retrofit
*$2,353,300 Capital budget

Committee Members reviewed handouts provided by Mr. Hutchins showing all changes to the Capital Budget including removal of items. Mr. Hutchins clarified that the total cost for the remainder of the remediation project at the police department is $100,000 but that there is $42,000 remaining from last year and that additional funding in the amount of $53,000 is needed. He further explained that the $65,000 from Parks and Recreation could have been used towards the HVAC project, however, there is a LOSAP payment that will need to be made.

Committee Member Mangin inquired as to the funding for oil and chip seal projects. Mr. Hutchins advised that the total cost for Old Croton Road is $175,000. Mr. Hutchins also advised of the following road projects for 2019:

Public Works
- Oil and Chip
  - Leffler Hill
  - Old Croton
  - Bonetown
  - Harmony School

- Laurelton Trail and Belmont reclamation

Engineering
- Sunny Hills Section II
- Case Boulevard
- Concord Ridge

He continued that there is a possibility of adding another road depending on the amount of grant funding received for Case Boulevard.

Fire Truck

Discussion commenced regarding the purchase of a new fire truck including postponing until next year; holding a referendum; implications of postponing in terms of a cost increase; and mutual aid.

Committee Member Gilbert reiterated a concern raised during the previous budget discussion by the Fire Company regarding truck access to the new multi-dwelling development behind Stop and Shop for fire suppression. Committee Member Gilbert continued to explain that the Fire Company advised that the current ladder truck is difficult to navigate in tight spaces and that the proposed new truck is the same size as the current Quint but with a farther reach.

During the discussion, it was suggested that the Fire Marshal review the plans for truck accessibility.

PRIVILEGE OF THE FLOOR

There was no public comment.

ADJOURNMENT

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

Meeting adjourned at 6:22 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Lisa Fania, RMC
Township Clerk